

THE REVIEWER

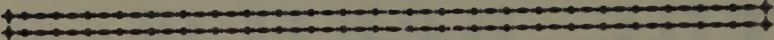
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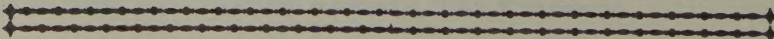
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THE REVIEWER

Vol. III.

October, 1922

Nos. 5 and 6

Chill

BY AMY LOWELL.

I thought of myself as a walnut
Hung above fallen leaves,
Desperately clinging and jerking
At the edge of a hollow wind.

I counted the leaves below me,
Scuffling and grating together.
I feared lest my withered stem
Should drop me too soon upon them.

The hollow wind played music,
Running over the branches.
The sapless chords of the branches
Whined a shrunken, glimmering tune.

The moon with a hump-backed shoulder
Shook a cloud off as though it were water,
And her light dripped down like water
Over the crackling leaves.

And shadows rose from the tree-trunks,
Cocking their legs and their ankles,
Dancing a dance of snapped elbows,
Distorting the beds of the leaves.

The owls flew shrieking above them,
Field-mice, their long tails twisted,
Ran like an army of ants
Gnawing and nudging each other.

And the wind played cymbals and tubas
To the beat of a tarantella,
Rocking in broken circles,
Chaining the tops of the trees.

And I was the kettle-drum tapping,
Tap-tapping my shell on the branch,
Terribly pulled and contorted,
Fearing the dance of the shadows.

Then there came to me the vision of a hepatica
Standing thinly out of a mold of Winter leaves,
Star-white, calling Good-morning to a soft sky.

Gently swayed the white hepatica,
Drinking the wet mold.
I felt the roots streaming through it,
I felt the moisture rising into the white petals.
I saw the sun reach down and answer the bright
 hepatica.

I loosened my stem and fell—fell—
Into blackness,
For the cloud had re-captured the moon.

The Irony of Admiration

BY GEORGE STEVENS.

It has for several weeks been fashionable to begin discussions of all sorts with quotations from, or at least reference to, Aldous Huxley. Not only, however, for the purpose of keeping up appearances, is one of the now celebrated Miss Penny's remarks a suitable beginning for a disquisition on certain aspects of present-day American criticism. The remark concerned the American sale of *Nuns at Luncheon*, and was to the effect that there would be no such American sale. We may take it that Miss Penny, though not altogether a serious-minded person, meant what she said in this connection; and of course Aldous Huxley agreed with her. But in fact Aldous Huxley, especially in *Mortal Coils*, has happened to evoke one of the two or three universal and often recurring epidemics among American critics. The tendency in this case is to repetitious eulogy—by no means necessarily unqualified, but, collectively, widespread.

To complete the illustration, and then have done with Mr. Huxley: Heywood Broun, astonishingly eclectic, during the baseball season, as to his reading, has recently found time to write three or four vaguely commendatory paragraphs on Mr. Huxley; H. L. Mencken, always eclectic, in his way, considers him no ordinary fellow; and F. Scott Fitzgerald has increased the number of his own rivals for popular approval, by branding him the wittiest man, after Max Beerbohm, now writing in English. Now the tastes of such representative reviewers as Mr. Mencken and Mr. Broun, and of such egregious novelists as Mr. Fitzgerald, adumbrate the tastes of a very considerable public; and the American sale of *Nuns at Luncheon* is accordingly fairly remarkable.

Whatever the function of criticism should be, and granted that the ideal is seldom enough realized—for with respect to the more widely read American critics, Croce and J. E. Spingarn are thoroughly visionary—one actual incidental function of all criticism at present consists in recommendation and dissuasion. Critics develop their followings largely through the readers' estimation of the reliability of their judgment; the readers, in fact, are themselves anxious to find recommendations. But this es-

timation of a critic's integrity, or congeniality, of taste, is not necessarily the result of experience of his taste; quite as often, apparently, of the reviewer's own facility. Thus, often a reviewer is taken as an end in himself, and his recommendations, incidental, are usually acceptable because of some engaging quality peculiar to him. Heywood Broun has countless followers, in spite of his present unbookish proclivities; no one undertakes to read half the things H. L. Mencken recommends; and somehow publishers find it advantageous to quote the favorable words of Franklin P. Adams.

It seems that a process of popularisation by critics, while commercially agreeable to favored authors, might come in time to undermine their self-confidence—in spite of the fact that the usual result is the reverse of this. For if genius and taste are identical, widespread appreciation, and still more the fashion of fervid admiration, leave the original genius, in whatever degree his genius be estimable, in a position altogether unoriginal. The father of a school, his contemporaries recognise him only as a member of it; they, too, have become members. The tendency, realised as admiration of contemporaries goes on long enough, is towards equalisation of admirer and admired. This circumstance is unfortunate. The critic may not be considerably promoted, but the reputation of the creator is degraded, for they have made a fad of him. The process of disintegration through admiration occurs only to the contemporaries of the faddists. If Mr. J. V. A. Weaver assumed a sudden fondness for Lucretius, it would disturb no one; either the enthusiasm would not be contagious, or it would be too uninformed to be destructive.

Each critic collects unto himself a few enthusiasms, which may or may not be discoveries of his own. They seem excessively inelastic with their enthusiasms, in spite of the fads they choose, on the side, now and then to follow. Mencken, constantly watching for a great American novel, makes a pet of Theodore Dreiser. Heywood Broun measures new books by the standards of Wells and Shaw. Likewise the rest of the younger generation; it is not that they have no standards; rather, on the whole, that they have inexplicable ones. As to the fads—enthusiasms temporarily common to a whole class of commentators—the most

important just at present, for example, is not a person, but a system, namely, psychoanalysis. This is about to be superseded by attention to hormones; when the process is completed, the dignity of psychoanalysis no doubt will grow, the subject having become remoter.

Some critics, however, prefer to grow garrulous over their distastes rather than speak highly of their discoveries. Perhaps it is that they have more distastes than enthusiasms, and fancy the idea of equal representation for all subjects which interest them. Sometimes the desire of the critic is to reform things. It becomes increasingly obscure whether this latter is one of Mr. Broun's motives. It is certainly not one of Mr. Mencken's, who says merely that it diverts him to chase mountebanks. Mr. Mencken is the outstanding example of the usually unfavorable critic, putting in much more energy on it than the other constituent of the Smart Set, content to be in bed and asleep at eight-forty-five rather than allow Mr. Belasco to irk him too much.

The fact is, it actually seems to be easier to criticise bad things than good ones. There are some reasons why it ought to be otherwise. Certainly recommendation to readers is more useful than dissuasion, and much more than such repetitious dissuasion as one is accustomed to. And after all, a critic who genuinely appreciates some of the rather enormous numbers of things that can be appreciated, is more important than one who spends most of his time oblivious to them. And, like the tendency to go in for fads, the tendency to do as much unfavorable reviewing as possible has become an epidemic among American critics. Criticism is managed now largely by the so-called younger men. To be critical rather than appreciative gives them, somehow, it seems, the appearance of maturity. Enthusiasm always contains an element of adolescence lurking in it. There are plenty of things the critics are enthusiastic over, but to talk too much of these would lessen their prestige; a certain element of gloominess—at about the standards of the New Republic—is necessary to the appearance of competence. It is not overcritical to condemn a bad piece of work, but it is overcritical to condemn the same thing more than three or four times, using space that

could be given to more stimulating ideas, or for that matter to condemnation of another bad novel. This specious fastidiousness, practised by American book-reviewers, becomes first platitudinous and obvious; later vulgar; and it is likely to develop into a real absence of appreciation. Dramatic critics are immune from this generalisation, for they are under obligation to attend all the plays that are produced, and seldom enough have an opportunity even to indulge in a fad.

Those among the critics, on the other hand, who do not fall within Mr. Mencken's group, unfortunately are one of the causes of the tendency, for they are older, and they go to the other extreme. One must read rather sedulously such men as Stuart Sherman and William Lyon Phelps and Clayton Hamilton before one comes upon any striking denunciation of any important person or institution; and in the course of this quest one comes upon considerable over-praising, and many enthusiasms for books and plays—notably, on account of Mr. Nathan's activities, plays—which the younger men justly scorn or overlook. This enthusiasm, in intensity rather moderately agreeable than fiery, generally takes the form of recommendation; surprisingly so, for one would expect this professorial group at least to classify objects historically. Professor Phelps has heartily recommended all the works of Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson, and this recommendation is typical. And while the recommendations of this group are by no means causes or results of fads, the effect on authors is the same as the recommendations of F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Farrar, J. V. A. Weaver, and others like these, whose criticisms one so often sees in publishers' advertisements. For recommendations are, under certain conditions, discouraging.

No wonder, then, Mr. Mencken—taking so individual a critic because in this he is representative—reiterates his platitudinous objections to Dr. Frank Crane, Methodism, and the B. P. O. E. But he should know by this time that his readers no more than himself hold with Dr. Frank Crane et al. A critic whose *bête noir* is John Roach Straton is essentially unimaginative, even unobservant; and if he spends much time discussing, in this light or any other, John Roach Straton, he squanders it. Carol Kennicott was on a slightly higher plane than the natives

of Gopher Prairie whom she detested; and those who detest Carol Kennicott, aside from the natives of Gopher Prairie, are on a slightly higher plane than hers; others are more indifferent, or for some reason are interested in her as a character.

This preoccupation of Mr. Mencken's with the futile and the banal has made his style inflexible and tiresome in spite of his vocabulary. It has robbed him of any tendencies he ever had to give more response to art than a dispassionate, objective, paternal encouragement; and this is in spite of his having shown a capacity really to enjoy art, chiefly music. Even one of his earliest and best books—George Bernard Shaw: His Plays, the first book written on Shaw—contains little more than synopses of Shaw's earlier dramatic works, and a few dozen pages of gossip. Shaw, remarkably, does not mention this book in his portrait of himself. One other instance: the short introduction to Cabell's *The Line of Love* amounts to a condemnation of John S. Sumner, the observation that the joke of the Jurgen episode was on the American public, and the rather flat assurance that Mr. Cabell is a competent artist, in contradistinction to Mr. Maurice Hewlett. Mr. Mencken's influence on American criticism has been largely in the direction of ponderosity. Appreciation is of greater importance than adjectives, cleverness, and pieces of hate, which are Mr. Mencken's contribution, and claim to greatness; and also, as to that, Mr. Broun's, and likewise those of all the less colorless men of this school, now in question.

A certain cleverness, it seems, goes with dissuasion, while adjectives are handmaids to recommendation. Appreciation, however, is usually accompanied by a good style. Mr. Seldes, for example, and the temporarily lamented Mr. Hackett, write well, and have something to say. But—passing over these—those who do not write well, and say little, might do more if they chose to respond to what they like. A certain number of eccentric enthusiasms after all add individuality, and are merely strange—like Burton Rascoe's taste for E. H. Paul's *Indelible*—much more admirable than Heywood Broun's tendency to fall in with the crowd in his almost unqualified admiration for middle-western novels and middle-western *vers libre*, H. L. Mencken's effective encouragement to writers to write badly, and similar

general deficiencies in taste and scholarship among the members of the younger generation.

When H. G. Wells and Rebecca West agree in their critical opinions of a novel like *Growth of the Soil*, the phenomenon only excites curiosity. But discovery in America at once develops into fashion, and this success brings on countless imitators. One's enthusiasms are criticised by being brought into contrast with persons who ought not to be mentioned in the same breath, to the detriment of the latter, perhaps, but to the entirely questionable glory of whatever extraordinary fellow the critic has hit upon. This journalistic criticism makes the smallest demand on both the critic and the reader; it is easy enough to fall into an imitative movement, sponsored by contributors to *Vanity Fair*, and it is easy to point out the well-known deficiencies of Mayor Hylan, Dr. Crane, President Harding, Eleanor H. and Gene Stratton Porter, Harold Bell Wright, Brander Matthews and Calvin Coolidge. It is more difficult to appreciate, say, Lytton Strachey, to sum him up in a few words; and he has not been thoroughly popularised. But even Lytton Strachey would in some degree be spoiled if Harcourt, Brace and Company advertised what F. Scott Fitzgerald might say about him, and if he subsequently did a series of articles for John Peale Bishop.

The Patrician

BY R. LYNN RIGGS.

Soft silks from Araby,
Wines, and rich bread—
These were too poor for me
Who would be dead.

But brown crusts sustained me
And milk without cream.
Good living these gained me—
This, and a dream.

Richmond

BY EMILY CLARK.

It is an unpardonable audacity for a person with no communication whatever with the spiritual world to touch a subject which is largely intangible. Richmond, except for the small section formerly known as "the court end of town" is not expressed tangibly. The physical city, fortunately, is not the spiritual city. Richmond means to everyone who knows it chiefly the people who live there. With inevitable exceptions beautiful houses have not been built here since the Civil War, although there are many expensive ones. Aside from the green glory of trees which sets this city apart from most others of its size, the charm that belongs to the Virginia counties and estates departs from Richmond several miles below the locality where all of one's friends live, and the recollection that a few miles down the James are Shirley, Brandon, Westover and Tuckahoe, like Sleeping Beauty Palaces in a lost wood, must be held close. Down town, in the face of shabbiness, dirt and a rooming-house mustiness which penetrates even into the streets outside, there is peace, loveliness and, in special spots, at certain hours, enchantment. In Leigh and Clay and Marshall Streets there are rows of houses of soft red brick, or faded yellow, or grayish stucco, with wide halls and gracious porticoes, shadowy with magnolias and crape myrtles; houses decorated in summer with shirt-sleeved men, and women with exhausted faces, occasionally by Africa itself, picturesque but also, in this neighborhood, blasphemous. For this belonged to the men and women who made Richmond one of the few places west of England where soft and charming, if sometimes piquant English was spoken, and people lived leisurely and in the grand manner.

While in New York and Boston and Philadelphia there was a dignified society, it could never be irresponsible, was never an end in itself, nor purely decorative, for the great fortunes which preserve those cities today from many of the evils which have overtaken Richmond were then in the making. They were being made by men who were attempting at the same time to make a

social system, and an entirely successful social system cannot be utilitarian. Here, it was quite otherwise. There was no visible industrial life, as the means of living was furnished by a system of labor self-evidently impractical and impermanent, but which created a social surface impossible of attainment in any other way, which will not be again, a surface unrivalled. A hint of this can be caught sometimes on spring mornings, or better still, on hot September afternoons, when the sunlight at "the court end of town" lies over the worn brick sidewalks so thick and yellow that it seems ready to be scooped up, and the blue haze beyond the pillars of the White House of the Confederacy—now the Confederate Museum—leads straight to Lotus Land, or, it might better be called in Virginia, the Land of Lost Leisure.

Then it is that the figures who were familiar to these streets at different periods, the old Chief Justice in the austere doorway of the Marshall House, Constance Cary, before whom all austerity melted even in the grimness of Civil War days, or the great General himself, are not only possible but real. In Virginia, of course, the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* is Lee, although this was Washington's home. Except for the Marshall House, the Confederate Museum, the house which was first Wickham, then Valentine, and now the Valentine Museum, and Mr. Edward Valentine's studio, few of these dwellings have been preserved for ends even approximating their original uses. Away to the southwest, however, defiantly facing down both business and slums, several delightful old houses stand, protected by their high gray garden walls, continuing to shelter the authentic descendants of their builders. Among these is Miss Ellen Glasgow's. But surrounding the scene of the Confederate administration there is neither business nor slums, only apathy and decay. Because of this, on blue and yellow afternoons, when the householders are too much occupied within to sit in the porticoes and the stillness is broken only by an occasional cart, for motors are infrequent here, it is for a moment imaginable that people are again unaffectedly careless and suave and that there is literally nothing to do, anywhere.

I never leave this part of town without wanting to stay, and wishing there could be a social surge backward, as there

already is in New York towards the East River. That movement must begin quickly, or it will be too late, for the stucco is crumbling and some of the most entrancing of the white marble mantels, with the fat-cheeked cherubs and thick clusters of grapes, are being transported to glistening, pseudo-Colonial houses uptown. And all the time there are mellowed houses here that cannot be again, with magnolias that take generations to grow, ready and waiting to be taken. I have already extracted a promise from one person to move there if she can persuade six other people to accompany her, but the six who will form a nucleus have not yet been collected. Of course, everything of importance did not occur in this locality, but most things of social importance did, and that has always been primary here. Uptown, there are not only innumerable reminders of the War, meaning '61 to '65, but of Revolutionary times and of Bacon's Rebellion, long before the Revolution was conceived. These spots are marked often only by sleek stone tablets set in the walls of commonplace dwellings, stating that certain things happened here and certain people stood here. There is probably no city in the United States so wasteful of inherited beauty and dignity as Richmond, partly for the reason that Virginia was so rich in possessions of this sort that they were taken easily for granted, and partly from an ingrained aversion to what is troublesome. Colonial landmarks disappeared at one time with alarming rapidity, although the wholesale annihilation is now being checked. Lesser landmarks, too, associated with such picturesque people as Poe and Aaron Burr, have become infrequent.

The political rulers of Richmond had almost to be mobbed in order to save the square old gray bell tower in the gray and green Capitol Square, where the alarm was sounded in the Civil War when the Federal troops—better known then as Yankee—were about to enter Richmond after the Seven Days' Fight. These same political rulers were restrained by force from painting the statues of the great Virginians on the Washington Monument in the Square, whose dim greenness is the admiration of all lovers of bronze, a nice, new, shiny black, to prove how truly progressive this new South has become. In fact they had already begun their work when the horrid news got abroad, and

the mild-mannered, long-suffering population arose in mutiny. But the Governor's House in the same Square remains unmolested and unafraid, probably the oldest and the most nearly perfect in the United States. The Westmoreland Club has lately been snatched from the jaws of death in the form of a new building uptown, and Richmond is gradually recovering from the nightmare picture of the brilliant Mrs. Stanard's former home, where generals, statesmen, Dickens, Thackeray, and the—then—Prince of Wales, were made comfortable if not happy, diverted into civic rather than social channels. General Lee's wartime house has stood without threat of change. And the bricks from Poe's Literary Messenger building, destroyed by the inscrutable guardians of public safety, now form a pergola in the garden of the old stone house of King James' time, once called Washington's Headquarters, which has been transformed into a Poe memorial; the only house in Virginia that carries the initials of Jacobus Rex carved in one of its stones. For these, and other reasons, we are not utterly without hope.

Another radical change in the life of Richmond is the complete extinction of the line of beauties and belles, now fabulous as the gods and heroes. These did not vanish with the War, for several traditions, including the tradition, or cult, of beauty, lasted through and long after the Reconstruction. They were, of course, all a part of the same aesthetic ideal, literature, leisure, and the best obtainable in horses and drinks. All of this, naturally, is gone. I can remember, as a small child, running quite around a block, to see Miss May Handy, now Mrs. James Brown Potter, pass. No one would walk around a block now to see anyone pass. Whether it is beauty or the worship of beauty which has died would be difficult to say. But it is certain that if Miss Mary Triplett could once more drive down Franklin Street on a sunny afternoon, graciously on view in her victoria, with her hair as dazzlingly blonde as ever it was, the passing crowd would not properly appreciate its luck in the lady's choice of a victoria instead of a limousine. Nor would the historic after-dinner announcement at the Old White Sulphur that "beauty, grace and wit make a Triplett" bring a multitude of men to their feet with glasses ringing. There were, from time to time, women

with international as well as local reputations for beauty and charm, such as Amélie Rives, now the Princess Pierre Troubetzkoy, and the Langhorne, notably Mrs. Charles Dana Gibson and Lady Astor, M. P., the latter more lately turned to utilitarian aims. At present, there are numbers of women who are pretty enough, smart enough and charming enough to be satisfactory, but not sufficiently any of these to change the course of human events, or to be able to afford any exceptionally erratic habits and caprices. This may possibly mean that beauty is more plentiful and less concentrated, and that startling speech and erratic habits are too much an everyday matter to remain either startling or erratic. Or it may mean that men grow more phlegmatic and less imaginative as they grow more preoccupied. Certainly there are legends of old Richmond which make the current gossip of young Richmond since 1918 less breath-taking than might be supposed. Perhaps only beauties, wits and belles were granted those indulgences once that are now the property of everyone. The beauty cult lasted late, because it was nourished by survivors of ante-bellum Richmond and it was the special part of their tradition with which it was hardest to part. But the rest, the tradition of culture, died long before. There is, of course, education in its most frightful meaning, that of preparation for some special sort of work, but preparation to enjoy life to the full with every aesthetic sense, has been rare since 1861. The followers of the early ideal were forced to ignore it while they raked the ashes from their devastated country and used their hands for unaccustomed purposes. And the job, with its consequences, was less disastrous for the dashing figures who passed through the flames than for the drab ones who were born in the ashes. They and their sons attended to it with such unprecedented spirit that physically the South has been saved, for there is much money now in this tobacco-scented city, and there will be much more.

Aesthetically its salvation is still appallingly distant, for such undivided attention has been, and is being given, to numbers, size and "progress" that we badly need to be reminded "that little Athens was the Muses' home, that Florence gave the Renaissance to Rome". Richmond is curiously unaware of this seemingly

platitudinous fact. A distinguished man recently asked, rather bewilderedly and with the best intentions, of a Richmond person: "But if there is really no public library there, what do you do when you have to look up something obscure?" And the Richmond person who was asked the question replied in all seriousness, "I telephone Mr. James Branch Cabell". Music too, is heard in Richmond at incredibly infrequent intervals, and pictures worth looking at, except in the houses of those who inherit good portraits, are scarce. Money is now in our midst, but it is not spent for these things. The people who want them can find them conveniently close at hand in New York, and do not bother to bring them here. It is spent to make things bigger and more imposing. This is a natural consequence of the Reconstruction, when as much as possible that was material had to be salvaged. But this reason is not a permanent one, and it can remain valid but very little longer. In the meantime, what is not physical has been almost destroyed, with the shining exception of social Richmond. Where other fine arts have been neglected the art of living never has been, never is, neglected here. It is not rash to say that we live more serenely and gracefully here than in any other place I know. There is much placid conversation, carried on usually in voices that are easy to listen to, and if we talk about each others' affairs a good deal, it is with an intimately friendly interest oftener than malice. There is less actual leisure here today than in the North and West, for the excellent reason that there is even now less money. In spite of this, by a lovely miracle the people we think of as Richmond have managed to preserve the appearance of leisure, and consider it bad form to seem in a hurry, or too much in earnest about what they are doing, even on the grim occasions when they are working hard for necessities, or playing hard to reduce weight. Every Virginian in his heart loves leisure, and tries to represent his ideal in his person. We do not, whatever we may sometimes pretend, love work for work's sake in the praiseworthy fashion of the rest of this country, nor have we, as a rule, the mental attitude or the phy-

sical vitality which impels the North to play games hard and take them seriously. It may be the climate—at any rate, that is what we say.

In other places I often hear of cold people, or difficult people, or alarmingly arrogant people who must be carefully considered. Here, almost no one is cold. Here, almost all of us are as pleasant as we know how to be, and if we fail to please it is through no intentional fault of ours. The population, generally speaking, is fairly amiable and well-bred. It is part of the code, especially the feminine code, to do or say what the person or the situation of the moment seems to require. As for the masculine code—one of its most polished exemplars recently said to me that “good manners have died in Virginia since dueling was stopped”. I do not entirely agree with him. The men of Virginia are frequently polite when not compelled to be at the point of a smoking pistol, but it is undeniable that the prospect of pistols and coffee at dawn made both men and women walk warily. For, though women did not fight duels they were often responsible for them—this distinction, it must be admitted, they shared equally with cards and horses—and the last one which took place in this state, not so very long ago, was because of the blonde-haired lady who so considerately drove in a victoria in the sunshine. However—here is this for what it is worth. A man who has spent much time here and in many other cities, remarked once that although he had met many trivial persons in Richmond, he had never met a vulgar one. And he seemed to think the fact worth mentioning.

Though there is much futility here there is not a great deal of boredom, and surprisingly little feverishness, by comparison, of course, with other places. We have, it goes without saying, our feverish moments, among which are the week-end dances at the Country Club, acknowledged to be one of the loveliest of all Country Clubs and one of the most free and easy, there being practically no requirements for membership except the ability to pay dues. The ability to pay dues, however, is not the only requirement for entrance to other places than the Country Club, although it is a far more important requirement than it used to be. There are a few places left where it is still the least of the

requirements, but these are increasingly rare. Among some of the older people a fiction prevails of a society still built on an aristocracy of birth. It is a pleasing and romantic fiction, but nothing more. Many of the people who represent social Richmond at glittering gathering places in America and Europe have been part of it for only a few years, and have bought their places in happy unawareness of a social system that ended before their own began. In New York, and at many resorts, North and South, Richmond is advertised by people who, after all, are not essentially Richmond, though they are, beyond doubt, a smart, amusing and ornamental frosting. Money is extremely desirable, here as elsewhere, but in spite of this the old lady who is the grande dame par excellence of Richmond, whose word is law to a circle that includes money as well as caste and whose displeasure is to be dreaded, is financially not nearly so fortunate as the people she rules. I am not sure that this state of affairs could exist in any other city of this size. It is, among so many hideous consequences, a happy result of the Reconstruction, of the years when to have any money at all left was a disgrace, signifying that the wealthy one was in league with the Powers of Darkness through their representatives on earth, the Federal Government, up in the cold, black, uncompromising North. People spoke quite openly and proudly of their lack, and the resultant deficiencies, making Richmond today peculiarly free from that shoddiest and most vulgar form of American bluff, the struggle to hold up one's end, and the humiliating necessity for social sponging. A woman from another section of the country says it is the first place she has found where people constantly say blandly and cheerfully, "I can't afford it", whether it is a hat, a motor car, or high stakes at bridge.

Moreover, I can think of no other place where frequent parties composed of people with exactly the same amount of intellect, information and experience would be endurable. Those who can do nothing and say nothing worth doing or saying usually manage it with a reasonable degree of grace and plausibility. This too, in some cases, since 1919, without the same amount or quality of liquid aid that is depended on elsewhere, partly, no doubt, because Richmond is not a seaport town. Therefore strangers are im-

pressed with the fact that people here can sometimes regard each other with perfectly clear eyes and unclouded minds and find each other not unendurable—sometimes. As for aesthetic Richmond, or anaesthetic Richmond, there is noticeable, within the last few years among a minority of people, a ripple that may possibly swell to a wave, of interest in ideas, and the life of ideas. Ideas are at times even admitted socially into conversation. Whether this is a temporary fad or the beginning of a gradual change no one can say yet. But this much is certain: if ideas should ever become vital to us we are capable of making them more presentable in drawing-rooms than they are at the moment in New York or Chicago. For we shall, simply and naturally, deal with our ideas as we deal with our present work and play, with no appearance of haste, and not too much excitement or earnestness, nor an urge to rush into print with them with bits of eggshell still clinging to them. We do not take business or bridge, or golf or law, or horses or Africans, as hard as they take them in the North. We treat them all with gentle, even humorous indulgence. And when the Middle West has grown accustomed to its discovery of itself, and to New York's discovery of it, and our turn comes, we shall treat our own brand-new ideas and those of others in the same manner. We, who had discovered ourselves and had been discovered, while New York was still a Dutch traders' post and the Middle West had not yet begun to be, could not possibly be swept off our feet in the event of re-discovery by our great-grandchildren. We shall, however, smile graciously, for the very old invariably appreciate attention from the young, though they seldom make an effort to get it. If we produce ideas worth discovering there will be nothing like it this side of Europe, for a gently humorous attitude to ideas is foreign to the American cities where that amazing American product, known as the Young Intellectuals, flourishes like the green bay-tree. We shall never become excited about ourselves or our complexes or our ideas.

Pastiches et Pistaches

BY CARL VAN VECHTEN.

Notes for Collectors

Of the first printing of Ronald Firbank's *Odette d'Antre-vertes*, issued by Elkin Mathews in 1905, there was a *de luxe* edition, somewhat larger than the cheap edition, printed on vellum-paper and bound in white vellum stamped in silver. The title page reads, "by Arthur Firbank." This edition does not include the story, *A Study in Temperament*, which forms part of the cheap edition. Ten copies only were issued, two of which, Firbank informs me, went to the Infanta Isabella and Queen Alexandra. A third belongs to me. There are extensive alterations in this story as later issued by Grant Richards.

Firbank has been painted by Charles Shannon, by Wyndham Lewis, by Augustus John (he describes these drawings by John as utterly unkind), and, more recently, by Guevara, "a perfectly brutal little study of me," he writes, "huddled up in a black suit by a jar of orchids, in a décor suggestive of opium." Epstein is soon to make a bust. The favorite author of a growing circle is at present sojourning in Cuba. In a month Grant Richards will bring out his newest work, *The Flower beneath the Foot*.

The first edition of Arthur Machen's *The Hill of Dreams* is to be distinguished by the *E.* before the name of Grant Richards, afterwards dropped, by a difference in the texture of the red cloth, and by a broken letter B (there is a break in the top of the letter) in the word "By", about ten lines from the top of page 67. In Dr. Stiggins, the h in the word "hurled" on page 90 should be broken.

I have Edna Kenton to thank for the discovery of a hitherto unmentioned Edgar Saltus item. The *Perfume of Eros* was published in October, 1905, by the A. Wessels Co. This novel first appeared, however, under the title of *The Yellow Fay*, in *Tales from Town Topics*, a quarterly, in the number dated December, 1904. This periodical, the size of *The Smart Set*, is in grey wrappers with a decorative design. *The Yellow Fay* is stamped down the back in green, and on the cover in yellow.

Louis Wilkinson

Miss Frances Newman recently dragged Louis Wilkinson's brilliant novel, *The Buffoon*, out of the dustheap where it has reposed for seven years. It was a worthy undertaking. The book failed, I think, because it was published at the wrong time, at the beginning of the war. It is just the sort of thing that people are delighting to read now and I predict that when Knopf reprints it, which he is sure to do sooner or later, that it will meet with success. Although Wilkinson is an Englishman, Knopf first published three of his books (*The Buffoon*, 1915; *The Chaste Man*, 1917; *Brute Gods*, 1919) in America. Later they were issued by Constable and Heinemann in London, but none of the three met with success on either side of the Atlantic. *The Chaste Man* is an admirable performance but I confess that *Brute Gods*, aside from an interesting character study of a father, bored me. His early first novel, *The Puppets' Dallying*, published under the pseudonym of Louis Marlow by Greening and Co., 1905, is pretty poor stuff. Wilkinson, with whom I had many a pleasant chat during his sojourn as a lecturer in this country, acknowledged as much himself. His wife, Frances Gregg, is also a writer. *Chris-sy's Way*, a longish tale by Louis Wilkinson and Frances Gregg, appeared in *The Smart Set* for November, 1918. There is a study of Wilkinson, with interesting data concerning his school life, in the third series of Frank Harris's *Contemporary Portraits*.

Humor: Literary and Musical

Like nearly all other composers, Rimsky-Korsakoff entirely lacked a sense of humor, that is a literary sense of humor, as is amply demonstrated by a reading of his *My Musical Life*, shortly to be published in an English translation. Yet he composed the sparklingly humorous *Coq d'Or*. The melancholy and sentimental Tchaikovsky, too, was able to turn out *Oxana's Caprice*, a comic masterpiece. This would seem to prove that literary humor and wit and musical humor and wit are entirely distinct qualities.

Thought for the Bath-Tub

There are people in this world whom one describes as "paintable," but I have observed that no one ever paints the portraits of these people.

The Revenge of Time

Once it was difficult to find an actor who could play in an easy conversational tone, and it was the triumph of John Drew that he was one of the first to be able to do this. The subsequent trend of the drama, however, has given our young actors no other training; consequently, now it is difficult to find an actor who can express uplift or glamour or to represent any character which must be acted in the grand manner. Most of our young players, confronted with such a problem, are as self-conscious and silly and inadequate as Charlotte Cushman would be in Hindle Wakes.

The Grand Street Follies

The most amusing revue I have ever seen in America was The Grand Street Follies, staged as the final bill of the season of 1921-22 at the Neighborhood Playhouse. Critics have complained for years about the paucity of wit in the Broadway revues and the success of this modest effort, which seems to have been written over night by the actors employed and produced after three rehearsals, shows that this paucity of wit is the result of putting experienced librettists on the job. There are a dozen high-school boys in New York who could write a funnier and more original book than the book of the current Ziegfeld Follies. New York must have its Jean Coctaus and its Sasha Guitrys, but informal genius is never in demand in Manhattan. If the Neighborhood Playhouse and the other little theatres continue to produce revues, however, I predict that they will knock the business of the \$250,000 productions into a cocked hat.

Art and Prostitution

When I read that a man is prostituting his talent to cater to the popular taste, I smile. Authors write what they can, not what

they want to. If Wagner had tried to set *La Grande Duchesse* or *Orfée aux Enfers* he would have made a terrible mess of them. In an argument of this nature the name of Robert W. Chambers is always brought up, and one is told to read *The King in Yellow*, "a masterpiece conceived before Chambers began to write down to the public taste." Well, I have read *The King in Yellow* and I remain unconvinced.

Neither am I particularly impressed by the boasts of those who declare that they could write something if they wanted to. Those who can write, do.

A Note on French Dress

It is a great pity that French dresses have become the fashion throughout the world. Even in Japan they have become the mode. Frenchwomen, of course, appear to the best advantage in Parisian designs, and some American women may venture to wear them safely, but the Italians, English, Russians, Spaniards, etc., should revert to their national costumes.

Eternal Naïveté

I know a woman who has been in love with forty-five men, and each time she has been certain that she was in love for the first time. America, it seems to me, resembles this woman. A new sensation, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* or the *Chauve Souris*, is greeted with as much enthusiasm as if it were the first time America had ever been fooled.

Monsieur Croche, Antidilettante

Claude Debussy held the post of music critic on the *Revue Blanche* during the years 1901-2, and in 1903 he wrote for the *Gil Blas*. He is one of the few musicians who has displayed talent as a writer of prose. He had a devastating sense of irony and he was not above epigram. Of the Wagnerian system of leit-motifs he wrote, "It is as if a harmless lunatic were to present you with his visiting card while he declaimed lyrically what was in-

scribed thereon." He called Gluck "a pedant;" Bach, "that worthy man;" Beethoven, "a deaf old man;" Berlioz, "a monster;" César Franck, "a Belgian;" and Massenet, "our most notorious master." Of the songs of Schubert, he wrote, "They are inoffensive; they have the odor of the bureau-drawers of provincial spinsters,—ends of faded ribbon—flowers forever faded and dried—out-of-date photographs. Only they repeat the same effect for interminable stanzas and, at the end of the third, one wonders if one could not set to music our national Paul Delmet;" "one stumbles on Mendelssohn" in Schumann's *Faust*; Grieg's music gives him "the charming and bizarre sensation of eating a pink bonbon stuffed with snow;" Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* is "a grand historical opera."

That he might give complete freedom to his fancy, he invented a character named Monsier Croche, as James Huneker invented Old Foggy, and it was through this mouthpiece that he let fall most of his iconoclasm. Shortly before his death, Debussy gathered a sheaf of these papers under the title, *Monsieur Croche, Antidilettante*. The passing of twenty years, however, had softened his feelings and he erased most of his epigrams. Only Gluck still remains his target. Nevertheless, enough exists of interest in these papers, there is still enough style in the writing, to make the work one of the few books by a musician worth reading. It has been issued posthumously by the Paris firm of Dorbon-Ainé.

An Artist Cook

Cooking is the fine art most neglected in this country. By most Americans, indeed, I do not think it is looked upon as an art at all, probably for the reason that artist cooks are extremely rare. When, therefore, one discovers a culinary artist in America, the fact is worth celebrating. Personally, I am acquainted with at least one cordon bleu. I rise to salute Héléne, the super-cook. Like all artists, she takes her work easily. Show me an artist who labors and you show me a mediocrity. Héléne builds complicated dishes with the ease that you and I make letters. Part of her greatness lies in the fact that she abhors cliché and is constantly striving to invent something new. She never fails

and she is not afraid to venture into the most difficult realms of this particularly difficult art. She can fashion a chaud-froid as professionally as the chef at Voisin's, and it will be a much more tasty affair than that chef can make. Supreme test of a cook, she can boil potatoes. On those days when H  l  ne prepares a plain lunch of cottage cheese and boiled potatoes you will fare as well as you would elsewhere on a five-course dejeuner with all the delicacies of the season. You will return again and again to the dish.

Sermon on the Mount

There is a group of readers and collectors who enjoy cherishing their little secrets. They have their favorite authors, as yet generally undiscovered or from whom for a time public interest has been diverted, and they resent any attempt to give their favorites a wider audience. It does not seem to occur to them that living authors prefer fame and money to the appreciation of a silent few and that dead authors sometimes deserve a better fate than to be read by a handful of adepts in a closet. No doubt there were those who had read Ronald Firbank but the first editions of his books did not go out of print until I wrote about him. Many, doubtless, gave Henry Blake Fuller their silent prayers, but the fact remains that no general article had been written about the work of this man, whose first book appeared in 1890, until my paper was published in 1922. It is very pleasant, no doubt, to be able to state that you read *At St. Judas's* years ago but I don't think that does Fuller any good. Since my paper appeared the *Publisher's Weekly* has been crowded with advertisements of dealers demanding his books. It is certain that at no time has Herman Melville been entirely destitute of readers, but until his recent public excavation (within the last three years, indeed), it was quite possible to secure a copy of the first edition of *Moby Dick* for \$1 or less. The last copy sold in New York went for \$25.

Fermé

Both the Provincetown Players and the Neighborhood Playhouse, two of the most important little theatres in America, have announced their intention of closing their doors this season, to permit them to acquire new plays, to train actors and dancers, and "to experiment." This policy is akin to that of the farmer who permits his field to lie fallow for a season before sowing another crop. In the case of the farmer, however, there is a difference. He knows that the farmer in the next field can only grow vegetables and that he can go back to growing vegetables himself. The danger for these two little theatres is that other little groups may spring up in the meantime to take their places. The Actors' Equity Theatre is planned on a somewhat larger scale and, as it is near Broadway, it will compete with the Broadway shows and that other Broadway "art" theatre, The Theatre Guild, but it is entirely probable that some earnest band will convert a stable or a bottle-factory into the newest thing in little theatres and that when the Neighborhood Playhouse and the Provincetown Players reopen their doors they may find themselves somewhat out of date. An art theatre, like a magazine, gives everything, perhaps, that it has to give in two years or less. After that, possibly, it should close its doors forever and let a new movement take its place, instead of continuing to repeat effects it has invented sometime in the past. The Provincetown Players, for instance, discovered Eugene O'Neill and Susan Glaspell but it has seemed pretty well content to go on discovering them.

The Best Orchestra in America

The best orchestra in America is not the Boston Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, or the Philadelphia Orchestra. It is not conducted by Walter Damrosch, Mengelberg, Bodanzsky, or Stock. The best orchestra is Paul Whiteman's and I mean this perfectly literally. No orchestra in the country approaches this band for precision, nuance, and general perfection. There is another ground on which superiority may be awarded to it: it plays modern, *living*, American music.

Basic Principles in Book Reviewing

BY ALLEN W. PORTERFIELD.

Prosperity and publicity are ancillary; to thrive is to evoke comment. Strikes, prohibition and war debts are not merely events in themselves; they are the very lives of editors and those who go down to editors with manuscripts under their arms. Hence this unceasing reference to the book reviewer: he has flourished in the last three years as never before. He is so numerous at present as to make it quite permissible to regard him as a distinct representative of the human species.

But his ubiquitousness in the realm of comment and the attention he is attracting are not due to any novel peculiarity, meritorious or otherwise, on his part. He is before the public for the unexciting reason that his activity is unparalleled in the aesthetic history of this country. It is indeed not at all unlikely that we will have, in the imaginable future, a magazine that deals, not in reviews, but with reviewers. For the public will want to keep up with these fellows just as it at present feels an urge to know what may be known about radio.

After precisely fifteen years of experience however as a reviewer, I am somewhat disappointed in the remarks that have been made in New York latterly about book reviewing by men and women who should be redoubtable masters in the field. I refer to Brander Matthews, Henry S. Canby, Amy Lowell and Katherine Fullerton Gerould.

Last winter Mr. Canby wrote articles on reviewing in *The Nation*, *The Bookman* and the *North American Review* in which he got no farther than the "good" and the "bad" reviewer. His argument was sensible but unclarifying for, though academically trained and attached himself, he limited his discussions to such remarks about the quality of reviews as one would expect of a mind that had not had a chance to be disciplined. Concerning the various methods of reviewing he was mute. Amy Lowell "let him have it back" then in his own *Literary Review* of December 3. I pass over her argument, for to me it meant an unprecious little.

She merely took up Mr. Canby's contentions regarding the good and bad reviewer and either carried them farther or attempted to refute them.

It is to Amy Lowell's article that Brander Matthews, writing under the caption of "The Whole Duty of the Book Reviewer" in the Book Review of the New York Times of Sunday, July 23, refers when he says:

Last winter Miss Amy Lowell contributed to a literary review an essay "On Criticism" and as I read it I was pained to discover that she confounded criticism with book reviewing.

That Brander Matthews speaks of "a literary review" rather than The Literary Review is beside the point, pained though I personally am to see a critic of his standing unwilling to mention the best undertaking of its kind this country has yet produced. The real point is that when he places criticism and book reviewing in juxtaposition he is close to a really helpful attitude toward the subject under discussion. But then he leaves it as though afraid of it and fills out the remainder of his weekly pensum with anecdotal material.

When Brander Matthews undertook, also in the Times, a few weeks ago, to trounce, not Ludwig Lewisohn's *Up Stream*, which I myself could not defend except on extraneous issues, but Ludwig Lewisohn for his *Up Stream*, he quoted Jules Lemaitre's statement to the effect that "criticism of our contemporaries is not criticism, it is only conversation." That he repeated this quotation in the Times of July 23 is again beside the point. It shows nothing more than the possible effect of dog-day weather on a man who sets out to do a certain amount of reviewing each week. But until the types of reviews are set forth and the reviewers themselves classified, the quotation, regardless as to the purpose for which, and the hide of whom, it was dragged in has really nothing to do with the problem. Not a thing. Professor Matthews might just as well have quoted Georges Clémenceau on African women.

My surprise has just been aroused by another repetition. On February 25, Katherine Fullerton Gerould reviewed May Sin-

clair's "Life and Death of Harriet Frea" in the *The Literary Review*. Miss Gerould took excessive care to state that she would not be so scurvy—the language is hers—as to give the plot. She went into this at inordinate length for so short a novel. In the *Times Book Review* of Sunday, July 23, Miss Gerould was given the place of honor with her review of Edith Wharton's *The Glimpses of the Moon*. She again writes: "It is no part of a reviewer's business to give away the plot of a novel. That is a scurvy trick both to author and to a prospective reader."

If this thesis could be put to a great and solemn referendum, Mrs. Gerould would arrive, I feel, at that point where others before her have arrived as the result of the same method of getting at the feeling of the people. Hildegard Hawthorne reviewed Edith Wharton's *Glimpses of the Moon* in the *Book Section* of the *Herald* of Sunday, July 23, and Miss Hawthorne was "scurvy": she betrayed the plot. It is neither my duty nor my desire to enter into a review of these two reviews, though I am bound to say that of the two, Miss Hawthorne's is the more enlightening because of the fact that she "gives away the plot". What difference does it make? There are 364 pages in Mrs. Wharton's novel. My pleasure in it will not be dissipated by her fewer than 364 words telling me compactly what happens.

This brings me to my subject: What passes as book reviewing—and may be confounded with criticism—cannot be intelligently discussed until we realize that there are a number of legitimate ways of approaching a book, and a number that may be called illegitimate, though merely for the sake of balance in the use of descriptive adjectives. By the "illegitimate" I mean first those reviews that are written while the book is still in manuscript and for the exclusive guidance of the potential publisher. Having had pleasant and unpleasant experiences, both active and passive, with this type of reviewing, it is to me a highly fetching field. And if the publishers were willing to make unreserved confessions as to the money they have made, saved and lost as a result of these reviews, I am quite sure that the brightest of light would be thrown on a seemingly shady subject. But such confessions would be truly Augustinian and cannot be expected.

And there is the matter given out to the public by the colyumist with the literary penchant. He dips into a book and, finding a suggestive thought or picture, uses it as a text. It is neither book reviewing nor criticism; it is relatively dignified and occasionally informative fun-making on or near the editorial page.

Of the legitimate types of reviews, there is first the purely *expository* review. It does nothing more than summarize the author's ideas. Though the lowest in the scale, it is by no means to be despised. For librarians and book buyers it may be the most valuable of all. Anyone with a reasonable amount of experience and relevant endowments can do this kind of reviewing.

Proof of this is afforded by my own case. The first book I ever reviewed was Wolfgang Golther's *Tristan und Isolde in den Dichtungen des Mittelalters und der neuen Zeit* (Leipzig: Hirzel), a work of 465 large pages, the result of much study on the part of a seasoned German scholar. I sent this review, fifteen years ago, to Prof. Hermann Collitz of Johns Hopkins University, thereby submitting it to the then editor of *Modern Language Notes*. I was at the time a student at Columbia and as immature as any. Prof. Collitz, with characteristic kindness and obviously divining what I might probably be fitted for, returned my MS. and told me how to review the book: he had the expository review of it only in mind. He knew the limitations of his contributor. Had he discussed the work himself, he would have approached it from a totally different angle. My effort was finally accepted; and the lesson has never been forgotten.

Slightly superior to this is the appreciative review in which the attempt is made to show that the book is invaluable or worthless, diverting or tiresome, sound or specious. A great deal may be said for this type of review, though infinite mischief may be caused by it. A noted writer, creative or critical, expresses his admiration for a work in superlative terms and the rest of us give reason a holiday. Or some small soul with a grudge condemns it and the work of years may be done irreparable harm. Of Johan Bojer's *Power of a Lie* Hall Caine said: "It is the greatest novel I ever read." Publishers seize on a sentence like this as a beggar would dash for a bulging wallet found lying by the wayside.

Akin to this, but immeasurably more valuable and rarer, is the *judicial* review, the real creative criticism. To write such necessitates as broad a knowledge of the subject as the author himself had. If intelligence were as nearly universal as downright and unrepentant misinformation is common, the majority of our reviews would be of this type. Then publishers could select their selling passages with perfect ease and with less damage to their consciences. But it is an imperfect world. That editor, consequently, is thrice fortunate whose list of reviewers is sufficiently catholic and cosmopolitan to enable him to mail out the volumes publishers have placed at his disposal to authorities. But the subjects on which any one man is an authority are few indeed—generally one, occasionally two, and in the rarest of instances three. And much is to be said for lay opinion.

Different from all of these, and in some ways more valuable than any of them, is the *historical* review. A book has appeared, imaginative or scientific, and the reviewer sets out to find the sources of it, for the thinnest, least laudable, book has its sources. He then tries to show how it fits into the age in which it is written, what connection it has with the books of like kind that have gone before, and what bearing it may have on those that will come after it.

This type of reviewing is confined almost exclusively to academic circles, for the very simple reasons that the free lance is unprepared to do the research obligatory in such an effort, and that it is quite impossible to engage in this kind of enterprise unless blessed with an independent, or an additional, income.

The crux of the question, in this country where every eleventh citizen owns an automobile, is whether or not reviewing is to be a gainful occupation. Reviewing for publishers is no mean employment, measured in money, however unacclaimed the business may be. If endowed with a mind that is not asbestos to spiritual reactions, talking about and from books in the column may be decidedly lucrative. Writing expository reviews is drudgery and such is never well paid outside of the building industries. Appreciative comment comes high if the appreciator already has a name. Judicial criticism can be made to pay only where the critic has an

opportunity to write on the basis of what he has previously learned. Historical criticism pays nothing at all; it is the work of pure charity.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Suppose this were 1855 and Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* had just appeared (the same would apply to Darwin's *Origin of Species*). The publisher's reviewer would in all probability advise against the acceptance of the manuscript as being offensive to the American Legion, the Sulgrave Institute, or the Knights of Columbus. The colyumist would relieve himself of some pun on the title or quote a passage and then close the day with some such ejaculation as, "Old Charley is to be felicitated on having a facile *Feder*." The expository reviewer would give the plot. If he did his work well, there would be nothing scurvy about his action. For the real source of excitement in a novel is not the plot so much as how the plot is elaborated. The appreciative reviewer would comment on Kingsley's ability to tell a story, to paint scenery and to depict character. The judicial reviewer would evaluate Kingsley's epic technique and show the extent to which he was right or wrong in fearing that the Pope would some day come up and commandeer Westminster Abbey, or that the Spaniards would find land at Brighton. The historical reviewer would trace *Westward Ho!* to its sources; he would go into the genesis and growth of the Oxford movement; he would show why it was impossible for an Englishman of that time to be an admirer of both Cobden and Drake. And he would explain Kingsley's relation to the historical moral.

So it is. Whether the book reviewed was written yesterday or in prehistoric times is incidental. Whether it is reviewed by *Les Jeunes* or the aged is a fatuous alternative to keep in mind. I gave an acceptable expository review of a book fifteen years ago which I would tackle to-day with extreme hesitation, merely because I feel it is time, in my own case, to get beyond the stage of recapitulation. Whether what reviewers turn out is conversation or criticism depends upon them and their methods and not upon the casual remark of a Frenchman who died after, and because of, coming to the belief that the Allies would lose the World War. And if a colyumist can put money in his pocket by merely

chaffering about books when a conscientious judicial or historical critic engaged at nothing else would become a public charge it is quite the private business of each. The reading public accepts what they offer. But since it must accept it or go uninformed, it has an inalienable right to know that there are various ways of disposing of the writings of other people.

Philosopher

BY DUBOSE HEYWARD.

They fight your battles for you every day,
The zealous ones who sorrow in your life,
Undaunted by a century of strife
With urgent fingers still they point the way
To drawing-rooms in decorous array,
And moral heavens where no casual wife
May share your lot; where dice and ready knife
Are barred, and feet are silent when you pray.

But you have music in your shuffling feet,
And spirituals for a lenient Lord
Who lets you sing your promises away.
You hold your sunny corner of the street,
And pluck deep beauty from a banjo chord—
Philosopher whose future is to-day.

Notes on Ultra-Modern Music

BY HAROLD RANDOLPH.

To begin with, it may be doubted if there *is* such a thing as progress—in the sense of improvement—in music as an art. Movement there must be, for it is an inescapable necessity of our world, but whether it be forwards or backwards or sideways who shall say? A simple art is the expression of a simple people and a complex art of a more sophisticated people, but sophistication is not necessarily either wisdom or virtue. There have been composers in every age who aroused the best and noblest in us and others who frankly appealed to our material side, but no age has ever had a monopoly—or even a preponderance—of the finer qualities. Certainly not our own! Those, therefore, who espouse the cause of the ultra-moderns, or experimenters, in any art do so chiefly from restlessness and not from any very real desire to reach a higher plane of spiritual enlightenment.

It is plainly the business of an artist to record, for the purpose of conveying to others, his thoughts, feelings and emotions. It is, therefore, of the first importance that he should be sincere—that he should record only what he genuinely experiences. The least suspicion that he is posing or making a deliberate effort to be original arouses our antagonism at once and thereafter we make no effort to understand him.

Naturally, the one who makes the widest appeal is he who records sensations which we have all experienced, but if we can be convinced that an artist speaks the truth regarding himself at least, we are usually ready to make an honest effort to listen to him.

The next thing in importance is to make up our minds as to whether or no he lives within the wide boundaries of the region we call normal. Whether he is telling us of far-off strange countries which he has visited and which he makes us want to see, or has merely strayed across the frontier of reason and is recording impressions only possible to a disordered mind. Needless to say, the boundaries of this territory vary greatly with different persons and are to some extent modifiable in the same individual, but even

the most indulgent must draw the line somewhere. We may be vastly amused for a few moments over the antics of the insane patient who imagines himself a teapot, but after all has nothing to do with our lives and the mirth it engenders is not of a sort that leaves a good taste in the mouth. So we can be greatly diverted over some of the wild experiments in modern art, but the real test is not whether the flavor is new and piquant but whether the stuff has genuine nutriment in it—not whether the little by-road leads to an adjacent shady nook but whether it gets you further on the highroad that art is bound to follow.

It is good that there should be revolutionists, for in this way only, perhaps, are some of our shackles to be broken. It is even good that there should be some who are determined to discard everything based on tradition, for they thereby let off steam and in the end learn something, but those of us who have lived long enough to acquire some sense of perspective know that they are only behaving in the traditional manner of the young; puppies falling over their own feet and kittens chasing their tails, for it is no more possible to disregard all tradition than it would be for a baby to leap from its cradle and run a race without first learning to walk.

Music, even more than other arts, is a language, a language that it takes the best part of a lifetime to learn fully to understand—much less to speak—and he who would make a genuine contribution towards its development must do so by adding to our existing vocabulary, by refreshing us with new turns of expression, not by deliberately discarding everything with which we are familiar and undertaking to speak to us at once in an entirely new tongue. But this, it seems to me, is the pitfall into which the ultra-moderns are falling. There was probably never a time in history when the world was in so receptive a mood as now to new ideas and new ways. A repetition, therefore, of such a phase as the uprising against Wagner in his early career would be in our day almost unthinkable—and this despite the fact that the difference between his “language” and that of his predecessors was as nothing compared to that between the latest Schoenberg, say, or Stravinsky and even their own earlier manner . . . much less that of their fathers of the late nineteenth century.

It seemed to us that Debussy had taken as long a stride away from his contemporaries as man may dare (if he hopes to be understood at all) when he not only made his melodies but founded his harmonies on a whole tone scale. Naturally he was resisted at first, for here was the nearest thing to a brand-new language that had ever been attempted. But he had a plan, a theory, which it must be admitted he ran somewhat into the ground, and managed to emit a gleam of real genius that lit up our darkness and confusion until we learned to understand what he was trying to say. It is too early as yet to determine his rank among the truly great, but he added some immensely valuable colors to our palette and music can never be the same as before he lived and wrote.

But what are we to get from the multitude of ultra-moderns who seem to be merely striving to outdo one another in cacophony? Discord is certainly not new. It has existed since the very beginning and the contrast between it and concord, the resolution of discord into concord, has always seemed the essential vital element, the very driving force itself of music. Of course our conception of what constitutes discord has undergone—and is still undergoing—considerable modification and expansion, but can it be well to discard euphony altogether and depend entirely on what, from even the most radical point of view could only be described as varying degrees of cacophony? To me, for one, the result is intolerable monotony. Perhaps our theory that the only true concord is that composed of the first, third and fifth intervals of the major and minor scales may be a bit rigid, but has a chord made up of every chromatic interval within the octave any real character? All colors mixed together merely produce gray.

The measure to which Bolshevism has entered into music was furnished me the other day when a friend—who was by no means devoid of either musical taste or experience—came to me with eyes fairly shining with excitement to say that a man with whom he had some business affiliations had invented a device for reversing the phonograph records so that they played their tunes backwards. This seemed to him to open up a vast unexplored region of musical possibilities and resultant financial emoluments to the one who got there first.

I confess that I was for a moment too nonplussed to find words. After my breath had returned a bit I asked him if he thought a picture would do as well upside down. He was not quite sure that those which aimed merely at effects of color or a sort of geometrical design, such as the cubists produce, might not. I then tried an analogy with a story or novel, with the dénouement first and the character drawing and descriptions last. Even this did not greatly disturb him, for have not some great writers—Conrad, for instance—done very nearly this!

Had I been discussing the matter twenty years ago I should have pointed out to him with a firmness admitting of no argument that music must have a shape; that its valleys and peaks must be arranged with a view to contrast and cumulative emotional effect; that the skilful employment of discord and suspension leading into the expected and finally longed for concord was the very warp and woof of it. I forbore, however, for it was plain he would merely have looked upon me—as I doubt not Mr. Leo Ornstein would—as quaintly Victorian. I contented myself, therefore, with assuring him that the idea of playing reproducing records backwards was not new and in consequence not patentable, as I vividly recalled hearing such a thing done twenty years ago—and also that I had rolled upon the floor in hilarity over the result.

What then is the difference, if any, between the latest developments in music and those of the past? Is it merely a question of degree? I think it goes rather deeper than this. Just as the ultra-radical of to-day is not content to try to improve the governments we have—refusing to face the fact that if the individuals do their part—with intelligence and real public spirit any government can be made satisfactory, and that failing that none can—but must sweep away everything and start afresh, so the extreme modern composer seems determined to write as though Bach and Beethoven had never existed. They think, poor chaps, that they are thereby achieving a startling originality, but if the truth were known it is often because they have nothing really new to say that they are forced to resort to such extreme measures in order to hide the fact. A real creative genius can afford to utilize the means at hand—to employ the language spoken by his world, merely expanding and developing it to meet his peculiar needs. If

he deliberately discards this and elects to express himself in Choc-taw the chances are that his ideas have not enough vitality in them to stand the light of common day.

This latest school in order to further differentiate itself from all that has gone before likes to call itself the "Realist" as opposed to the "Impressionistic" school. This last is the term they apply, to the French period in particular, from Franck to Ravel. These labels are, of course, purely fanciful and mean nothing, except a further straining after originality. All music is in a sense impressionistic and every sincere composer believes himself at least to be realistic, in that he is attempting to record genuine moods.

If we are to be forced to grant this honesty of purpose to even the most extreme—an admission which it would require the rack and thumbscrew to extract from me in certain cases—then we can only reserve to ourselves the right to say that if such moods be in truth genuine, we gladly forego our privilege of sharing them with their creators.

Butterflies of Uganda

BY VINCENT STARRETT.

Butterflies of Africa: drifting clouds of blue:

Clouds of white and yellow drift: carnival of reds:

Sunset flashes at the noon: shining fields of dew:

Snowflakes stung to ecstasy: floating tulip beds!

Mardi Gras of loveliness: brilliant masquerade:

Wheeling, reeling companies of Lilliput hussars:

Blue and white the canopy, green the velvet shade . . .

In the night of wonderment, are you silver stars?

The Poetry and Prose of Walter de la Mare

I.

The Poetry.

BY FREDERICK B. EDDY.

Some twenty years ago that literary miracle, which happens a few score of times at most during a century, occurred. A true poet published a volume of real poems. There is no record of even the slightest pause in the earth's diurnal rotation, and, although from the elements of conversation on politics and the weather, beauty and music had been wrought, still, no one, or, certainly only a very few, discerned the marvel. Even the critics failed to notice that the water of daily speech had been changed into the wine of song. The poet who performed this thaumaturgy, Walter de la Mare, was then unknown, (a possible reason for the lack of critical appreciation); the volume was *Songs of Childhood*, issued, so I have read somewhere, at the poet's own expense, though the imprint of Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., appears upon the title page. In 1906 another volume—*Poems*—appeared, and still, as before, the sun lingered no longer in the sky upon the day of publication than the moment assigned by Science for its down-setting. *The Listeners* was issued in 1912, and *Peacock Pie* in 1913. And while I do not think that on these two dates of publication, any phenomena occurred which were likely to jeopardize the uniqueness of Joshua's miracle, none the less, the great ones of the critical world looked up and saw that a new star was blazing in the poetical heavens. *Motley* appeared in 1918, and in 1920 Mr. de la Mare put on the dignified bindings of a two volume issue of *Collected Poems*. In 1921 that exquisite volume *Flora* came to gladden the hearts of all lovers of beauty, and, somewhat later in the same year *The Veil and Other Poems*. His output for twenty years, therefore, is small in quantity, but in quality it is, like the clothing of the King's daughter, of wrought gold.

Mr. de la Mare's poetry is as lovely as the candid eyes of children. His poems, like those Nicean barques of yore, bear us,

not to our own native shore, Heaven forbid! but to those enchanted lands, that lie, "ten leagues beyond the wide world's end",—The Lost Gardens of Childhood, The Valleys of Dream, The Bewitched Greenwoods of Fairyland. Much of the inspirational sources of his verse seems akin to that of the anonymous author of *Tom o' Bedlam*. Like Tom, his, too, is "a heart of furious fancies", his pen "a burning spear", his Pegasus "a horse of air" on which he rides with "Knights of ghosts and shadows". Like Tom o' Bedlam, too, he "knows more than Apollo", for grace has been given him to see the heart of children. One has but to read his *Songs of Childhood*, *Peacock Pie* and *Flora* to know that he has looked upon the white beauty of a child's soul. Like Tom o' Bedlam, he has a "constant mistress"—beauty; and the moon, night, the "lovely owl", "the flaming drake" make music to the faint sorrow that breathes through so many of his poems.

His verse may be divided in two main groups—those of children and those of more serious intention and inspiration, or, should the word be, adult, rather than serious. *Songs of Childhood*, *Peacock Pie* and *Flora* would form the first group. *Poems*, *The Listeners*, *Motley*, *The Veil* would form the second. Neither division, however, is exclusive. Songs of innocence are scattered through the second group, and songs of experience through the first.

The poems of children are beautiful. There is simply no other adjective for them. They take us back, a bit wistfully, at times, to those lost gardens of Eden where boys and girls frolic, not as in the Eden by the Euphrates, with the animals and with angels, but with elves, fairies, witches, and the fabulous fantastic beasties that only children know. A delightful whimsey peers out, every now and then from the beauty. Shouts of sheer laughter sometimes, sometimes the lucent weeping of childish eyes. Mr. de la Mare seems haunted by the thought of the loveliness of innocence in children and the knowledge that their whiteness of soul must vanish with the growth of years. A gentle melancholy broods over his shoulder even in his earliest book,—a characteristic of his verse that endures throughout them all. Take the last poem in "*Songs of Childhood*"—

"Child, do you love the flower
 Ashine with colour and dew
 Lighting its transient hour?
 So I love you.

* * * * *

Evening will come, and alone
 The dreamer the dark will beguile;
 All the world will be gone
 For a dream's brief while.

Then I shall be old: and away:
 And you, with sad joy in your eyes,
 Will brood over children at play
 With as loveful surmise."

There is a hint of life's disillusion in the very first poem—"Sleepyhead"—the child who, lying awake in the white moonlight, hears a faint singing of the gnomies in the wood, confesses—

"But, as soon as I stepped in the dim moonlight
 To put on my stocking and my shoe
 The sweet shrill singing echoed faintly away
 And the grey of the morning peeped through
 And instead of the gnomies there came a red robin
 To sing of the buttercups and dew."

Yes, a "sad joy" haunts these Gardens of Childhood even though, at times, the poet laughs as gaily as Mother Goose. What more lightsome than "Alas!—Alack", or "The Banddog" or "Cake and Sack" or "Miss T." or "Jim Jay"? These are very charming nonsense verses, but if one looks deeper, one can read into them,—(I wonder whether the poet wants us to) something of that "secondary intention" of which we used to read so much before Maurice Maeterlinck started sprinkling salt upon the Blue Bird's tail. The rare charm of these poems lies in the beauty which he discerns and expresses with such peculiar felicity in children; the whimsical fancies, the elves, the witches, the beasts wherewith children people

the fairylands of their thoughts, the quaint outlandish freaks of words which only children think of, these, Mr. de la Mare interprets in a singularly happy fashion. He knows that like many of more discretionary years, they dwell too, in "blest melancholy's house"—that, like the "dear one" in Rupert Brooke's poem—"Thoughts go blowing through them, are wiser than their own". Is it not written that we must receive the Kingdom of Heaven as little children? That of such is the Kingdom of Heaven? Has not a Victorian poet given his imprimatur to that sentiment in the words "If of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, it must be Heaven indeed"? Well then, there must be something heavenly about these poems of children, some intangible beauty which is quite other-worldly; "all the sadness in the sweet, the sweetness in the sad" which tinges the dreams and thoughts of children seems gathered here in the silvery loveliness of song.

All this, that I have written, regarding Mr. de la Mare's vision of children's hearts is shown more explicitly in *Flora—A Book of Drawings* by Pamela Bianco, with,—as the title page modestly puts it—*Illustrative Poems* by Walter de la Mare. Of the pictures drawn by a little girl there is no need to speak. They are quaint, colourful, beautiful conceits of a childish heart,—a child singularly gifted. And the illustrative poems are really,—just that. The poet seems to have caught in words the beauty which the child has expressed in line and colour. Take the picture, "I Go Home"—I showed it to a little girl of nine, and read her the poem, and she caught at once the artist's intent and agreed that the poem expressed her idea of the picture. There is a fanciful touch sometimes which seems beyond the childish ken,—"*Misericordia*", "*The Moth*", "*Crazed*", these poems, admirable in themselves do not express, always, the drawing which accompanies them, but for the most part the poems of this book show how clearly Mr. de la Mare sees the minds of children and how beautifully he expresses that wonderful land of the fantastic.

In the second group the same haunting beauty of "blest Melancholy's house" which flitted elflike through the *Songs of Childhood* stalks more openly. It hovers, a phantom of delight, over the *Poems*, and in *The Listeners*,—(the loveliest volume Mr. de la Mare has given us) it broods ghostlike over almost every

page. In *Motley and The Veil* it comes again, a gracious revenant, not to trouble, but to console the singer.

These poems, which take us, now to the *Valleys of Dream*, now to the *Heights of Vision*, have an indefinable grace. They are not great in the sense that *Paradise Lost* is great; they are great as a *Tanagra* is great, are fine in texture as the "Heavens' embroidered cloths". There is a perfection in them which the major poets cannot give. Of all the lovely things which Mr. de la Mare has written, I like best, *The Listeners*, and of that poem four lines have, since first I read it, haunted my memory,—

"Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward
When the plunging hoofs were gone."

The theme of *The Listeners* is a constantly recurring one in Mr. de la Mare's work. A deserted house peopled with memories of bygone habitants,—these are *The Listeners*. It stands as a symbol, this deserted house, of the grave, of death, of memories gone by; but nowhere else has he given it such perfect expression. He possesses that rare gift in the poet,—the knowledge of when to stop and how. The end of *The Listeners* is perfect, so, too, this ending in "*Never More Sailor*"—

"And though the graves
Deep soundlessness
Thy once sea-deafened
Ear distress
No robin ever
On the deep
Hopped with his song
To haunt thy sleep."

Very beautiful, too, this, in "*Winter Dusk*"—

"When less than even a shadow came
And stood within the room."

The poem pictures a mother reading to her two children, and the spirit of her lover, their father, listening unseen. But how delicately all this is conveyed.

"Nor dreamed she, as she read to two
'Twas surely three who heard.

Yet when, the story done, she smiled
From face to face, serene and clear,
A love, half dread, sprang up, as she
Leaned close and drew them near."

Just as the beauty of children haunts him so the beauty of nature, flowers, birds, water, "Earth, ocean, air," the beloved brotherhood of Shelley are sources of his inspiration. One feels like echoing the words of "The Sunken Garden"—

"Speak not, whisper not,
Here bloweth thyme and bergamot
Softly on the evening hour
Secret herbs their spices shower
Dark spiked rosemary and myrrh
Lean-stalked purple lavender;
Hides within her bosom too
All her sorrows bitter rue."

He has not lost his magical conjuring with words and rhythm to evolve beauty in his latest volume, *The Veil*. The title poem which verges, at times, upon the "pretty pretty" has these charming lines,

"Out of a bush a nightingale
May expound his song; beneath that veil
A happy mouth no doubt can make
English sound sweeter for its sake."

The beautiful threnody for Edward Thomas, "Sotto Voce", "The Son of Melancholy", "The Last Coachload", "Sunk Lyonesse",

and the tribute to the "Strange fabled face" that "burned the topless towers of Ilium", "Not That Way", and "A Sign", these, and the rest, are verily the substance of beauty hoped for, the evidence of a loveliness unseen, save by the poet.

II.

The Prose

The Prose of Walter de la Mare consists of four novels and a short lecture on Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination. The novels are Henry Brocken 1904 The Return 1910. which has been reissued in a revised edition recently. The Three Mulla Mulgars and Memoirs of a Midget. His prose is as finely woven as a Bayeaux tapestry; there is a delicate rhythmic quality in it, a poetry which chants distantly through the cadenced sentences like a plain song motet sung in a vast cathedral.

I shall say nothing of his most recent novel, Memoirs of a Midget, since so much has already been written, the critical chorus being for once in harmony. His first and least known novel, Henry Brocken, is one of the loveliest things in English prose. The very title page gives one a whisper of the good things to come. Henry Brocken, His Travels and Adventures in the Rich, Strange, Scarce-Imaginable Regions of Romance. The tale tells how "on a bleak March morning with all the trees of my Aunt's woods in a pale green tumult of wind," the author, for the book is written in the first person singular, "set out quite unwittingly on a journey which has not yet come to an end." Rosinante,—for such is the mare's name on which Henry Brocken rides out,—took the road again long ere Mr. Dos Passos journeyed in Spain. She travelled with her master through a more romantic land, a country peopled by such "nurslings of immortality" as Lucy Gray, Jane Eyre, Julia Electra, Dianeme, Anthea, Nick Bottom, The Sleeping Beauty, Gulliver, Mistrust, Obstinate, Liar, Atheist, Revery, La Belle Dame sans Merci, Sleep and Death, A Doctor of Physic, Annabel Lee, and Creseyde. I feel sure that somehow and somewhere Henry Brocken came unto the gates of Poictesme and the

Garden beyond the Sunrise, that he met Dorothy La Desirée, Ettarre, Jurgen, and all that illustrious company.

The Return has for its theme "possession". The hero, Arthur Lawford, wanders into a churchyard, "old, green and refreshingly still." While he dozes beside the tombstone of an old French adventurer, the Frenchman's spirit returns, taking possession of Lawford, changing his physical appearance, attempting also, to absorb into his own, Lawford's personality. Lawford's struggle against this influence, the changes it brings about in his heart, in his relation to his wife, and his relations to his friends, Grisel and Herbert, these make up the story in which Mr. de la Mare has very delicately woven a fantastic romance.

Certain moments in literature linger always in my memory. I can never forget the little shiver of horror when, in *The Turn of the Screw*, I, too, saw Miss Jessel standing by the little lake, gazing across at Flora. Nor can I forget Miles playing with the ghost of Quint upon the moonlit lawn. And there is that tense moment in Conrad's *The Secret Sharer* when the captain sees the steward making for his cabin where the fugitive lies hidden. Yet I know of nothing that has given me quite the thrill that I experienced when I saw Lawford gazing horror-stricken "head to foot icily still" at "the changed, strange face" that looked back at him from the glass. And again, when Lawford fights the spirit of Sabathier step by step down the dark old stairs of his house I experienced that delightful shudder of horror. Beyond all else though, there is in *The Return* Mr. de la Mare's beautiful prose. The poetry of his style is as delicate, as finely woven as in the *Memoirs*, or his other prose works. A shy whimsical humor peers occasionally out, and the odd characters are drawn with such a skillful touch that they seem not so fantastic after all.

Then there is that extravaganza for children and grown-ups into which, if you wish, you can read a deal of philosophy,—*The Three Mulla Mulgars*. The story of Thumb, Thimble and Nod, the three monkeys of the forest of Munza Mulgar, and *their* "rich strange, scarce-imaginable adventures" in an enchanted wilderness of ice and snow. Nod's comradeship with the old sailor, Andy Battle, the long, long journey to reach Tishnar's lovely valleys, Nod's "dark-eyed, beauteous Water-midden", the

travels and battles, the enchanted banquet,—what a delight for those who have not grown too sophisticated to believe in fairies and wonderstones and Tishnar's little horses and monkeys that can make magic. Sentence after sentence drips with honey. Here, for example, are two taken quite at random,—“The Oomgar will not wake,” said Nod; “he sleeps as deep as the Ghost of the Rose upon the bosom of Tishnar.” Or again, “And beneath the giant sedge he leaned forward his little hairy head, and as his flame haunted eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, he perceived in the dark green dusk in which sh sat, a Water-midden sitting low among the rushes singing, as if she herself were only music, an odd little water-clear song.” It is such water-clear prose as this that makes Mr. de la Mare's books one of my enthusiasms. *Et in Arcadia, Ego*, I cry to him across the seas. Yes, he was born in Arcady; he dwells in the pleasant courts of the temple of Beauty; his books are among those listed in Beauty's Canon of Scriptures, and therefore I say for those who have read them, “flectamus genua”, and for those who have not yet received that grace, “Oremus”.

Pillau

BY ACHMED ABDULLAH.

The Kamalalah

I saw it in Africa, south of the Equator, not far from Bangasso. The Bari negroes had been victors the day before, had plundered and fired the village of their enemies, and now they were drunk with merissa beer and blood and excitement. Continuous quivering yells drifted across the M'bomu River, piercing the air like sharp arrows flying straight. Would come a silence that gave me the curious sensation that here, in the flaming, clogged, long-concentrated calm of the Equator, nature had suddenly ceased to breathe and was looking introspectively into her own soul. A second later would come again the Baris' piercing, high-pitched yells punctuated with the rubbing of tom-toms, the beating of wooden drums, and the blaring of ivory horns; and, through cracks in the thorn hedge behind which I watched, I caught a glimpse of oiled bodies, of arms and legs jerking up and down with uncouth movements.

It was the Kamalalah, the dance of victory.

The Baris poured out into the clearing, brandishing assegais and short-handled daggers and knobkerries and steel-bossed shields. They stamped their feet with a barbarous clank and jingle of metal ornaments till the grasses swayed rhythmically and the trees bent their squat, dome-shaped heads, sending down showers of waxen, odorous flowers. They broke into rude chant; then separated into groups, each led by a plumed, crimson-stained warrior, and giving its own war cry:

"Imbosé!"

"Umbois!"

"Ki'ya'yo!"

"Ingafô!"

the different shouts—meaning goat, dog, leopard, and lion—representing the sacred totems of each separate group.

Came another sudden silence. The earth was death-still, as if crushed by the overwhelming strength of the sun, the overwhelming, massed brutality of these Bari warriors—and a dozen young

girls rushed out of the zariba, while tom-toms and ivory horns took up once more their burden of sound. They ran into the circle of the blacks, who were again beginning to stamp their feet and to brandish their gleaming weapons; they dropped their draperies, slowly, one by one, with lingering gestures, until they stood naked. Then, with an imperceptible movement, they glided into the swing of the Kamalalah.

Some huge passion seemed to drive through the negroes, through stamping warrior and gyrating dancing-girl, with the strength of a great primeval shock; expressing—the thought came to me suddenly—all the whole exaggerated sexual and imaginative force of the African race—the strength and, too, the weakness.

The Bari girls moved slowly up and down, their hands outstretched and pointing, then suddenly gliding down the curve of narrow hips and pointed breasts. There was a sweet, sickening aroma of bare flesh; clear, above tom-tom and drum, the sharp breathing of the onlooking warriors.

One of the girls separated herself from the rest. She moved from the gliding dance into a whirl. Faster and faster she turned, her arms moving with odd gestures, both arms to the right, then to the left, her little heels stamping the ground with dull, staccato thuds. Faster, still faster, until she panted for breath. Her eyes became glassy.

All at once she stood stock-still, her body quivering, her heaving, pointed breasts fighting for breath; and, while a deep hush fell over the Baris, she looked up and down their ranks as if searching for somebody.

She seemed to find him for whom she searched. "*M'tue!—O Head—O Master!*" she said with a low voice, pointing at a six-foot, plum-colored giant whose body was stained with crimson and white stripes and whose head was encircled with a leather-frame ornamented with black ostrich feathers. She walked up to him, her feet treading the earth proudly with a slight jingle of copper anklets. She carried her head high. Her long shadow broke into a fantastic arabesque across the trampled spear grass and low bushes. Her face was expressive of a strange commingling of feelings: sorrow and, too, savage joy and passion—rather the trembling expectation of passion. Again she stood still, death-still as the wilderness at noon. Then she sank on the ground in

front of the Bari whom she had chosen. She clasped his knees as if surrendering to the inevitable, and he picked her up and pressed her to his heaving chest, bending over her with a great rushing of ostrich plumes.

Then he carried her away, out of the clearing, through an opening in the cactus zariba, out into the jungly wilderness . . .

Quite a few years since I saw the Kamalalah. And I was reminded of it just a fortnight back, when I was down in a little Delaware beach resort. I saw a dance there—a lot of young college boys and young girls—jazz orchestra—drums—tom-toms—savage, staccato rhythm—heavy breathing—fantastic gyrations. . . .

The Kamalalah all over again. Only the dancers were white, not Bari negroes. And there was no jungle.

But there was the beach—and a discreet porch. . . .

Mosques in Peking

There is one I saw in what the Europeans call the Tartar City and what the Chinese call the "*Cheng-li-ton*" or "Inside the Town." It is a squat building which blends curiously Chinese, Tartar, and Persian architecture. The outside walls are covered with Arabic characters. For always does the language of Arabia follow the faith of Arabia. The mullah preaches in Arabic, the muezzin calls to prayer in Arabic, and the Faithful chant the litanies in Arabic. But they do not understand a word of what they are saying, these Chinese Moslems, less even than the Turkomans whom, the year before, I had visited in Yarkand and Kashgar and who had at least an occasional smattering of the Prophet's holy language. These Chinese Moslems learn their prayers by heart, parrot-like, just as in certain Catholic countries they learn Latin prayers by heart without knowing the meaning. Their religion is that of hot, burning Mecca, but their soul is the eternal soul of Peking—Khan Baligh, as the Tartar conquerors called it—and thus is their mind, their intelligence, their superstitions. And so the mosque is not called as would be a mosque farther West: "The Mosque of Othman Wahhabi, the Clarified Butter-Seller", or "The Mosque of Hussayn, the Martyr"; but it is called "The Mosque of Tung-si Pai-lon", and to the left of the entrance gate swings

a huge, purple-and-gold paper lantern on which is inscribed in Chinese, not in Arabic, "*Li-Pai*", "Place of Worship." Very thoughtful, this. Very Chinese. Too, rather sardonic.

Farther North, in the Chinese City, is the great Mosque of K'ien-lung, built by the emperor of that name, for his black-turbaned Kansuh and Yarkand Moslem braves. It is a stone's throw from the flaunting gardens of Fa-yuan-sse and looks like a purple-and-crimson tropical moth whose wings are barred with tints as hard and clear as Jeypore enamel, and which seems out of place here, in the raw Chinese North.

Some Persian craftsman built it. And doubtless he was very homesick, and the great, stony soul of Pekin broke his heart as he dreamt here, in the eternal Mongol North, of Hafiz and Said, of the soft gardens of Teheran and the Isfahan women's white breasts. He must have had the impression that the ancient stones of Pekin, the ancient shadows in the Temple of Heaven, the ancient ground of the city, are screaming enormous, cosmic activities more ancient than themselves. He must have felt that the soul of Pekin, relentless even in its sleep, is pulsing everywhere, immense in passive power, moving inexorably and cruelly, very complex and yet very simple, surging close, and trying to draw in and devour everything that resists. He must have felt the monstrous *Urkraft* behind it all.

Anent Critics

What with a threatening censorship, I shall have to be wary in telling what I am going to tell.

How?

Well—let's hope that the censor, self-appointed or God-appointed, does not speak French.

At all events—here goes:

Some time ago I made the statement to friends that I object to critics, not on artistic grounds, but on snobbishly social grounds. I said that, being of average decent morality, I could not afford to mingle with the—oh—*Maquereaux de la littérature*."

Recently this judgment of mine was completely justified. For it appears that, this past summer, a prominent New York critic went abroad to Paris. Very naturally he took rooms in Passy—

which is the Flatbush, the ultima Brooklyn, of the French capital. Walking along the Boulevard Passy one day with a friend, he heard back of him a fish woman crying out her scaly, smelly wares:

"V'ci l'beau maquereau—v'ci l'beau maquereau . . ."

The critic turned to his friend, smiling benignly.

"My word!" he said. "They know me even in Paris!"

A Latin Saying

"Mulier taceat in ecclesia"—in church woman should be silent.

What about the other way around—?

"Ecclesia taceat in mulieri—"

Chanson Couleur Puce

Parce que, en écoutant la plainte macabre de ma passion,
 les plantes grisées de nuit écartent leurs corrolles,
 et les calices secouées aspirent la rosée;
 Et les feuilles lèvent des mains raides et vertes en poses extatiques
 et païennes.

Parce que, en sentant le parfum de mon désir,
 l'âme frôleuse de l'infini passe;
 Et parce que la lune, prêtant sa lumière à la mélancolie
 de mon cœur pierrot et ironique,
 Sourit, complaisante, à la sérénade mystique de mes mains sup-
 pliantes.

Parce que la moindre de mes pensées
 est un sonnet hâtif et douloureux
 à ta beauté,
 Et à la blancheur de ton corps doux et adoré.
 Parce que, enviant la passion de ma chanson,
 les cloches de l'église,
 basculant leurs sons lourds,
 bourdonnent,
 appellent.

Parce que les passions tristes et ignobles du reste du monde
ne sont que des pantalonades
gouapeuses et goulues . . .

Parce que je t'aime—
follement—

Critic—Behold Thyself!

Principles are those things with which we view the writings of the man who has not yet invited us to lunch.

Nothing is perfect. Not even lies.

The less a man writes creatively, the more time he has for advising other people how to.

Criticism is the science of surfaces.

Now read how the contemporary German critics condemned Goethe's Faust and sky-praised some Teutonic scrivener long since forgotten—and then laugh your head off!

The Sick Man of Europe

Why has Turkey, the 'Sick Man of Europe', weathered so many storms?

Why will he continue to weather them in spite of Armenian lies, of Greek boasts, and Lloyd-Georgian perfidy?

The answer to this riddle is simple, and should be of especial interest to Americans. For it is contained in the one word "democracy"—a democracy, of course, which has an Oriental sting to its tail.

Ever since Othman, the Tartar chief from Khorassan, swept out of Central Asia to conquer and to hold the richest provinces of the globe, the ruling caliphs of Turkey—like indeed all Moslem dynasties except, possibly, the Persian—have maintained unbroken the principle of the Koran that birth and wealth count for nothing, and that strength and ability are the only qualifications for the service of the state. Even slavery is no barrier to political or military perferment. Often, in the past, a sultan has stooped among the crowd, and has given the mantle of his own limitless power to soldier, Janissary, slipper-bearer, pipe-wallah, eunuch, or renegade, to white man or yellow or black, asking of him only one thing: Success.

"Absolute equality within the Faith" is the dogma of Islam, and, as such, that of Turkey. In a manner it is also the dogma of England and of America. But in Turkey alone it is a reality and, being a wonderful attraction to the picked men of inferior races who in America or in England would be barred from high service through social or racial prejudice, it has provided the caliphs of the Ottoman clan with an endless supply of genius and ability. The history of the grand viziers and the great bashas of Turkey is the history of men who, unhampered by the obstacles of birth, cultivation, or social position, rose by sheer force of ability: in war, statesmanship, and—let me, since I am a feminist, say it deliberately and without wishing to cheapen the brains and energy it involves—in seraglio intrigue.

Not only have the caliphs but rarely used or promoted the men of their own family; they have always systematically destroyed the few nobles of the empire, steadily upholding the principle that inherited wealth, inherited rank, and inherited over-cultivation would sound the death-knell to the democracy of opportunity and success which Islam demands and which Turkey needs. The result of this policy has been that the promise of a great career brought and brings to Turkey—consider a genius like Enver Basah or Kamal Bashah—a steady stream of clever, brave, picked men of the many races which compose the empire. Some of them have been and are doubtless intriguers, matchless villains in the accepted sense of the word—just as we find the like in Congress or Parliament. But many of them are truly able and patriotic men—I mention again Enver Bashah and Kamal Bashah—men who constantly succeed in restoring a dominion which seems always on the point of breaking to pieces.

It is this principle of democracy within the faith which for many decades to come promises to be the real reason why Christian priests will not sing high mass in the restored Cathedral of St. Sophia.

It is this same principle of sane, sweet Islamic democracy which will insure the eternity of the Ottoman Empire by the time the last lying Armenian will have squeezed the last dime out of sympathetic American purses, and the last Greek will have joined the hat-check boys' union.

Joan to Her Father

BY ROBERT NATHAN.

Before the milkman's early tread
Has brought my breakfast up the hill,
And drowsy parents lie in bed
Behind a door, aloof and still,
And only cook, dispassionate,
Kindles a fire in the grate,

Nurse picks me up, and if I've wet me,
She tells me heaven will forget me.

But later when the day grows jolly,
And even heaven forgets to frown,
And I to soothe my melancholy
Am reading novels upside down,

Nurse comes to find me in my play,
And takes my books and things away,
Puts them in order on the shelf,
And I must sit all by myself,

Alone, despite the morning's beauty,
To do my duty.

Missy's Twins

BY JULIA M. PETERKIN.

On those cotton plantations that lie along sluggish rivers there is danger and fever for the white people who stay after the first of June. They go away and stay until after frost.

An old negro mammy who lived at one of these places had to go away and stay too, to take care of a little, white boy whose summer home was in the mountains. One year she was very sad when the time came to go. Not because she didn't love the child, for she loved all little children, but because she had to leave behind her other people she loved, and who loved her and needed her too. Some of them were poor and helpless and in trouble.

There was Missy. Missy might need her sadly before frost came and she could get back home.

Poor little Missy. An orphan. Grown up in the plantation quarter without much raising. "Lil Mudderless," Mammy called her.

Everybody was kind to Missy as long as things went well with her. Until now, she had been a merry, little, black girl all her life. There was always a song or a laugh on her lips, and her slim little black feet were always ready to run on an errand or to trip out a gay little dance step. Always, until now.

But her eyes did not shine with fun these days. Tears made them bright instead. Her lips had a pathetic quiver instead of a happy smile. Her little black feet were no longer nimble or fleet but moved haltingly as if they carried a heavy burden.

When the time came for Mammy to say good-bye in June, she put her arms gently around Missy and said,

"Gawd bless you, chile. Mebbe I'll git home sooner'n you t'ink. Mebbe. De fros' might come early dis year. We don't know. Pray, chile, pray. I' gwine pray too. Mebbe Gawd'll sen' de fros' early. He knows you gwine hab need o' somebody fo' stan' by you, *He* know. *He* ain' gwine fail you. No. But don' fo'git. We haffer tek all Gawd sen'. We haffer beah em de bes' we kin."

She patted the girl's slender shoulder and gave her a few more words of motherly counsel and left her sobbing heart-brokenly.

The summer dragged slowly by and the frost did not come early. The leaves were due to turn scarlet and yellow but they kept quite green. Mammy grew restless and often sighed. When letters from the plantation were read to her she'd listen, her ears keen with anxiety and then she'd say,

Oh! I was kinder lookin' to heah—somet'ing—" and there'd be disappointment in her voice although she tried to seem casual.

Day after day passed, warm and bright. Each evening she watched the pale sunsets. No cold weather was promised in those. No frost could ever come from twilights so blue and mild. Mammy looked at the west where the evening star shone and prayed. She said only a few simple words,

"Do, Fader! T'ink on po' lil Mudderless. Lemme git home to 'em een time." That was all, but each word came from her heart.

Then one evening a sunset came that made all the hill glow red. Mammy looked at it and said,

"T'ank Gawd! Fros' is comin' tonight. I gwine git home soon, now."

She was right. Within a few days she and the little white boy were on their way home.

But the train seemed to creep all the way. It stopped at every station and at every cross-road beside. The journey seemed endless.

Mammy's mind strayed from the little white boy who sat by her and watched things slipping by outside the train window. She did not hear the questions he asked. She was thinking of things far away.

Not until he climbed up and leaned against her and called her plaintively did she seem to heed him,

"Mammy," he pleaded, and he took her old, withered face between his white, chubby hands,

"Mammy, you gone off an' lef' me?"

He was accustomed to her undivided interest, and he was hurt by this strange indifference.

She put both arms around him and smiled reassuringly,

"No, Sonny," she said,

"No, Mammy's done come back to you now. 'E gwine stay right heah wid now, atter dis. 'E ain' gwine lef you no mo'. No. Not no mo' to-day."

"Whe' you been gone to, Mammy?" he questioned with the same accent all the children she had nursed learned from her,

"It des seem lak I heah Missy callin' me, Sonny. My mine run 'way an' gone to em fo' I know whe' I was. Das all. I'm come back now. I'm come back fo' stay right wid you."

The little white boy looked thoughtful.

"Mammy—" his face was perplexed,

"You could hear Missy callin' you all de way f'om home?" He did not miss seeing the mysterious shadow that clouded Mammy's bright eyes although she answered him evasively,

"I dunno, Son. I dunno. Mebbe I ain' heah nuttin'. I might-a been nod off an' dream 'bout Missy. I gittin' ol' now. I sleep quick same lak chillen."

The little white boy said nothing more for awhile. He seemed to be thinking hard. But when Mammy asked him,

"Son, wha you t'inkin'?"

He answered evasively too,

"Nuttin,"

When they reached home that night it was late. The little white boy was tired and sleepy. Mammy undressed him and bathed him and put him in his clean, little, white bed. Then she sat by him patiently and waited for him to go to sleep. Many a time before she had done this for him. For his father too. How years go by. Each year that came seemed to bring its babies and tired, sleepy children. All her life seemed to have been spent putting children to sleep, or taking them up and dressing them in the morning. Wiping their tears and trying to smooth away their troubles or being glad with them.

Sometimes grown men and women were hard to tell from children. Sometimes they needed tenderness too, and sympathy. Sometimes their silent, unexpressed thoughts cried out louder

for help and pity than children's voices. Her eyes had learned to see deeper than features and her ears heard appeals that made no sound.

The door cracked open gently, and the little white boy's father was peeping in,

"Is he asleep?" the man whispered.

The old woman nodded, and the man tipped inside. He stood by the bed and looked at the sleeping child, then he patted Mammy's shoulder gratefully. She smiled and turned to face him.

"Son, is you troubled 'bout somet'ing?"

He shook his head,

"No," he spoke low, "Everybody's well. The crop's good. Things are fine this year, I think."

"How's my people?" she asked.

He hesitated and looked away,

"Well, I think—" Mammy waited.

"Tell me de news f'om Missy, Son. Is you heah anyt'ing?"

The man openly paused before he drawled,

"Yes, Mammy—I believe I did—"

He turned to the open fire-place where a yellow blaze burned cold on the fresh, clean hearth.

Mammy got up and followed him. She looked straight into his eyes and asked,

"Wha' 'e hab, Son? Is you heah? Is 'e git t'rough safe?"

The man, for some reason, could not meet her eyes. He was troubled. She could see it plainly.

"Tell me, Son. Don' keep nuttin back. I gwine know 'em soon anyhow." I gwine to Missy soon ez de mawnin' git heah, Tell me now. Wha Missy hab? Is 'e libin? Tell me all about em."

"Missy is getting on well, I think. She was, the last time I heard. Her children—she had twins—they both died."

"Po lil Mudderless," Mammy's voice was full of pity.

"I too hate it, 'E loss all two! Po t'ing! Well, all o' we haffer know trouble. Yes, Jesus! Mebbe I better go see 'bout 'em tonight."

She looked at the bed where the little white boy slept sound.

"I'll be back fo' 'e wake een de mawnin'."

She took up her black, sailor hat from a chair and put it on, saying,

"Lil Mudderless is been need me sho'nuff. I heah 'em call me."

The white man's manner was puzzling. She could not understand what was on his mind. She stopped and looked at him again,

"Son" she said, "Wha' ail you? Somet'ing is got you troubled. I eber did know de look when 'e come een you' eye. Tell me wha' tis."

"Mammy—" She was right, something was on his mind,

"I hate so to tell you this—"

"Go on, Son", she said sternly,

"I got to know 'em sometime."

He squared himself before her and spoke steadily.

"It sounds pretty bad. I don't know who is to blame. Nobody meant to be careless—"

"Fo' Gawd's sake! Wha you gwine say?" She was distressed already.

He spoke slowly.

"When Missy's twins died—they were born dead, I think. The fools that looked after her took them out and buried them in the garden back of your house, Mammy—"

She felt relieved, that wasn't so bad. If they were born dead it was better maybe, to bury them quickly, to get rid of them. But the man was not through yet! What else had he to tell?

His voice quivered a little. He shivered.

"The garden fence—it was broken, Mammy—and the grave must not have been very deep—"

Ah! She was ready for the words that followed. She knew them before they were spoken.

"The hounds—" he went on, "The hounds broke in and dug them both up—and ate them—"

The silence was intense, like a thing in the room. The little white boy's quiet breathing seemed harsh.

Mammy tried to speak. The word was inarticulate. Presently she said calmly,

"Look lak somebody *would* a buried Missy's lil chillen deep 'nough."

She looked at the child on the bed and said sadly,
"Po lil Mudderless," then she went out of the room.

Melusina at Lusignan

BY VIRGINIA TAYLOR MCCORMICK.

I onetime stood at Lusignan and thought
I saw upon the battlemented towers
A shadow, dim and coloured glistening blue,
And Melusina, I was sure that you
Leaned on that railing carven, black and wrought
With figures strange and long forgotten flowers;
And on your head a crown of sea-weed green
And shadowy grey: so sorrowing your mien
My tears sprang salt at recollections of
Your ill-formed children and your deep, proud love
For Raymond, he who failed before desire
To give you trust, the only pledge you asked,
When yielding to his heart's white, ambient fire,
You from the sea's strong bonds emerged and masked
Your mermaid body in earth-woman's guise
And answered him with passion in your eyes.

Ah, Melusina, time has quenched the stain
Of your deception; in your grief-dulled brain
Still ring the echoes of his words and cries
Of little children. So succeeding kings
Who hunt at Lusignan hear broken sighs,
And all the star-paled rustling forest sings
With your transcendant sorrow as you wait,
Faint blue-bound shadow, sea-nymph, woman, ghost,
Through centuries a Peri at the gate
Where love once made your soul its holocaust.

The Decade's Menace

BY HANSELL BAUGH.

According to Mr. Bertrand Russell and his philosophical forebears, almost anything would be rather more than likely to happen in a world where the sum of two and two was something other than the four we ordinarily conceive it to be. Such a world, he says, would reduce us to utter doubt, although that very general proposition in mathematics is tenable on purely a priori grounds. But in this world of ours, so far as we are able to know it, certainty is not so curtailed that one can not at least be hopeful about the future of the race; for this twentieth century has only now reached its years of discretion, and much may be accomplished before the next fin-de-siècle period in history arrives. That is the cheerful attitude exhibited even by persons who presumably realize that centuries are arbitrary divisions of time and quite differently calculated in various quarters of the globe. Mr. Max Beerbohm for instance, though the intricacies of the Mohammedan dispensation may not be intimately known to him, is certainly aware that all Semitic peoples are well on the way toward seeing the last decade but one of the fiftieth century since Yahveh created first light and then the sun: yet he caricatures the flippant eighteenth, the stolid nineteenth, and the still puzzling twentieth centuries in the act of contemplating one another and endows them with the anthropomorphic form which every Christian historian presupposes as their possession. Man, so it seems, has a definite impulse to construct all things in his own image. And this impulse, exemplified in poems like *Ring Out, Wild Bells* and in the unvarying symbolism incorporated in cartoons for New Year's Day, sufficiently explains the derivation of the popular idea that any reference to "the nineties" without mentioning in the same breath the descriptive adjective *decadent* would be an incomplete utterance. For a nonagenarian, admittedly, is nothing if not on the wane.

This decadence is a word made current by its frequent use in connection with the history of the Roman Empire, but its appli-

cation to literature is due to certain French critics of the eighties (so says Mr. Havelock Ellis) who seized on it to characterize the styles of Gautier and Baudelaire. For them its meaning was broad enough to cover the two schools of diabolism and symbolism, and on occasion it might even include the work of the out-moded Parnassians. For Mr. Ellis decadence is simply a later and altogether natural development of classicism.

But Dr. Max Nordau devotes to the phenomenon of decadence an entire chapter of his *Degeneration*, an exhaustive volume which applies the pathological doctrines evolved by Lombroso to the various creators of a large number of nineteenth century art works. This chapter contains translations of passages from Gautier, Baudelaire, Huysmans and Bourget which analyze the term decadent by revealing its implications for those who willingly group themselves under it; but it is evident that Dr. Nordau gave himself the trouble of rendering the ideas of these French writers in his own quite foreign tongue only in order to sum up their content in epithets like "rigmarole" and "word-wash": for he was here afflicted by the modern urge toward theory, although his book too was published back in the nineties. A typical instance of his habit of construing the evidence so that it should accord with his theory appears in the discussion of Mallarmé. After a full page of sarcastic comment on the two or three "brochures" responsible for Mallarmé's great reputation as a poet, he appends this note: "Since these words were written M. Mallarmé has decided to publish his poems in one volume. This, far from invalidating what has been said, is its best justification." Dr. Nordau seems to have thought it not worth his while to wait and read the *morceaux choisis* before judging their merit; for Mallarmé had "long pointed faun-like ears"—a physical feature which is "of especially frequent occurrence among criminals and lunatics". This prejudice, if it were admitted to be that, might not be entirely discreditable, for an open and truly judicial mind—such as that of Mr. Havelock Ellis—is rare enough to be considered an anomaly.

Rémy de Gourmont, a writer referred to by both Mr. Ellis and Dr. Nordau, and with whom both have much in common (like the one he was an adept in physiology; like the other, in

psychology—all three have written novels and art-criticism) was himself perhaps not quite free from bias, since he was a Frenchman and symbolist. But for this same reason he was in a position peculiarly favorable for revealing the spirit of decadence as it was manifest in those writers who were not only his contemporaries but his intimate companions. This of course is all out of consonance with the cherished belief in a postulate which holds that only Posterity will be able to discover the true formula for critical justice but which also fails to take due note of the permanence of Aristophanes' contemporary estimate of Euripides, or Ben Jonson's of Shakespeare, or for that matter Cicero's of Catiline. Gourmont's essay on Mallarmé and the Idea of Decadence is brilliant proof of his acuity, just as are also the eight others which Mr. Bradley translated last year for Professor Spingarn's European Library. And its contribution to the general argument amounts to something quite different from Dr. Nordau's diatribe against the whole of modern society as reflected (the art-equals-mirror hypothesis again) in the pictures, music, books and sculpture produced since 1850. The many writers who are fond of reminding us that the inmates of an insane asylum believe their wardens to be more unbalanced than themselves must know that even the dictionary definitions of such vague terms as morality and civilization recognize their dependence on custom and the common behavior of majorities. And so one may permissably wonder, supposing his major premiss (that most of the people in the world are degenerates) to be based on fact, what the logical conclusion of Dr. Nordau's reasoning should be. We have convincing evidence that decadence and degeneration are not altogether strange and new to history. The very colleges of our country endeavor to instill in the minds of their classical students the subtle distinction between a "golden" and a "silver" Latin, roughly corresponding to the power of the Empire at its zenith and at its nadir; and the particularly inquisitive juniors who elect a course in reading the Satyricon and The Golden Ass are duly warned against those perverted works—so much more entertaining yet so much less reputable than the golden Ciceronian opera. Gourmont offers a related idea to his reader's consideration: "Before long, this simple notion will be

admitted, that there is no inherent distinction between good Latin and bad Latin; that languages live and that their changes are not necessarily corruptions." This is a contention which holds today for a Louis Aragon or a James Joyce the same just application that, in 1898, it held for Mallarmé.

But Dr. Nordau will not even admit that the French decadents were able to trace their ancestry back to the later developments of Roman literature: he considers them as unrelated pathological phenomena. Thus, since he is discussing literature in terms of abnormal psychology, he can say that the most valuable work of the famous graphomaniacs, Joris Karl Huysmans, is found in *A Rebours*—*Degeneration*, it is true, was written several years before the publication of the *En Route* trilogy—because that book presents the typical decadent, as conceived by its author's hysterical mind, in the anaemic and neurotic Duke Jean des Esseintes. No one would wish to assert that a des Esseintes—or for that matter a Mallarmé, who would write prose to please a taste so erratic—was wholly sane, even if he knew precisely the distinction between sanity and its opposite. But there are surely aspects of intellection and sensation not to be encountered in the brickmason or streetsweeper who may be taken as the norm for measuring human concerns; and if an individual who is acquainted with them chooses to put his knowledge into words, surely he may do so without being sentenced to a cell in the psychopathic ward along with the other victims of that curious disease called graphomania.

Whatever his attitude at the present moment may be, Mr. Ellis really was able, in 1897, to consider the works of Huysmans in a light very different from that in which the alienist views a manuscript produced by some poor bedlamite's pen. There is nothing so strange in the fact that Mr. Ellis's discussion of decadence led him to quote with due courtesy the identical passage from Gautier which Dr. Nordau, without further comment than that implied by a mark of exclamation which he interpolated in his own rather bizarre translation, called "rigmarole". Both quoted also the analysis of M. Paul Bourget in which he says that decadence results when "the individual life of the parts is no longer subordinated to the whole"; to which Dr. Nordau

subjoins his adjectives subversive and anarchistic. Mr. Ellis justifies it by referring to Nietzsche, who "with his usual acuteness in cutting at the root of vulgar prejudice" did not "overlook the fact that the energy which in more primitive times marked the operations of the community as a whole has now simply been transferred to the individuals themselves, and (that) this aggrandisement of the individual really produces an even greater amount of energy". This of course would be beneath the contempt of Dr. Nordau, who saw in Nietzsche only delirium and plagiarism. It would be no less possible and rational to see in Dr. Nordau—if one were not reluctant to share his terminology—a simple case of neophobia, for he never charges degeneracy in any man who wrote ten years before the latter half of the nineteenth century.

I find it a great pity, speaking as an inhabitant of the United States, that Dr. Nordau's comment on American literature is limited to this lone statement: "Mad Whitman was without doubt." He would be able, if his knowledge of foreign letters extended farther than France and England, to supply material of great value to the student of compatriotic decadence. Mr. Ellis remarks on the subject that "the chief literary artists of America—Poe, Hawthorne, Whitman—are for the most part in the technical sense decadents".

But after all, decadence is essentially a Roman and derivatively a French manifestation; so that any comparison between the literature of Rome or France and that of America would be pointless unless it also proceeded from full awareness of the difference between the two civilizations. And France and America (to choose only the coetaneous, less improbably comparable pair) have always retained their separate identities without falling into confusion except in the texts of those historians who inexplicably discover a marked resemblance between the American and the French Revolutions. Therefore, it would be more accurate to say, the writers who express decadent America in the nineteenth century are not Poe, Hawthorne and Whitman, but Bertha M. Clay, Mary J. Holmes and Laura Jean Libbey. For just as the importance which Rimbaud and Barbey and Villiers have for Frenchmen today rests chiefly in the influence which

the work of those men exerts over the established great among their living writers, even so must we submit to the authority wielded by Bertha Clay-Braeme, Mary Jane Holmes and Laura Libbey-Stillwell in the direction of a living American writer to whom most men bend the knee so reverently that the remaining few feel forced at least to read.

The figure of Mr. Dreiser has certainly loomed as importantly large as any other in our national letters of several decades past. For this reason many critics have been at great pains to discover, in what manner they were able, his origins and causative influences—a proceeding so difficult that Mr. Mencken, for one, has taken refuge in a mystical acceptance of him as colossus and phenomenon rolled into one. But it goes strongly against the grain to account for anything but the sequence of events in a Hardy novel on so accidental a basis, especially since Mr. Dreiser himself furnished something of a clue when he wrote, less than a year ago, a letter to the editor of the St. Paul (Minn.) Daily News protesting against some unpardonable omissions from a list of significant American authors compiled by the head of the department of American Literature and Civilization at the Sorbonne. It seems that the names of G. B. McCutcheon, of Bertha M. Clay, and of Laura Jean Libbey, the author of 872 “separate and distinct American romances” were overlooked by monsieur le professeur. “Am I to believe (asks Mr. Dreiser) that the French and Europe are not to hear of those as representative of us? Rather than this should be I will gladly resign my place on the list to make room. The French and every other nation should know us as we are—at our best, as it were.” A reader of these words necessarily recalls that their author was at one time a very valuable employee of Messrs. Street and Smith, the publishers of a widely circulated Dime Library. And a reader of Mr. Dreiser’s fiction almost as necessarily suspects that an important light is here thrown on his obscure literary origins. It is true that *Sister Carrie* was printed in 1900—five years earlier than the date at which, we may suppose, he made his first acquaintance with the ten-cent novel: but *Sister Carrie* is not the touchstone by which Mr. Dreiser’s personality as a writer can be gauged, since the manuscript of that book “was revised by some

anonymous hand, and the printed version is little more than half the length of the original" (vide *A Book of Prefaces*, by H. L. Mencken).

The ideas behind a novel like *Jennie Gerhardt* are of course in no way comparable to the "philosophical" stuffing so copiously supplied by any mentionable dime novelist. Decadent writers in America, like those of any other country, are classed together only because of their affinities in style. In the highly civilized Roman or French Empire it is the tortuous involutions of a Commodianus (so one is told) or a Baudelaire (as one may easily discover without the aid of an informant) that reveal the decadent: in the United States, where civilization has even been described as nonexistent, it appears proper to seek for decadence in a slightly less complex prose.

This distinguishing quality of style, common to Laura Jean Libbey, the Sunday supplements and (unless there is something more than wit in Mina Loy's mot on his protestantism against style) Mr. Dreiser, has the elusiveness that requires quotation before it can be appreciated. Mrs. Libbey writes a preface to her dear readers, saying: "Though we have never met, we seem to know and understand each other's heart-thoughts as old, tried, and true friends do, and the years that come and go, instead of drifting us apart, seem to weld us the more closely together, and I am thankful that it is so, for this friendship is very sweet to me and the companionship comforting." Mr. Dreiser analyzes his heroine: "The spirit of Jennie—who shall express it? This daughter of poverty, who was now to fetch and carry the laundry of this distinguished citizen of Columbus, was a creature of a mellowness of temperament which words can but vaguely suggest." The epigrams which serve Mrs. Libbey for chapter names in her novel *When Lovely Maiden Stoops to Folly* are quite similar to those in which Mrs. Bracebridge (the fine lady in *Jennie Gerhardt* who was "the last word in the matter of self-sufficiency, taste in the matter of appointments, care in the matter of dress, good form in the matter of reception, entertainment, and the various usages of social life") "indicated her philosophy of life". For instance, Mrs. Libbey urges that "Fate Marks Our Destinies for Us Before We Are Born", and Mrs. Bracebridge,

without mysticism, states an equivalent: "Most people are born silly. They are exactly what they are capable of being." The evil influence of the Sunday supplement crops out in Mrs. Libbey every time she uses a word of more than two syllables; in Mr. Dreiser it is less frequent, appearing only in such cases as the description of the time when "the great senatorial fight came on in the Legislature". Candidate Brander was "given the fight of his life" because "a great railroad corporation" which had been friendly was secretly "throwing its strength in behalf of" his opponent. "Shocked by this defection, he was thrown alternately into the deepest gloom and into paroxysms of wrath." But though Mr. Dreiser were able to envy Mrs. Libbey for her little witticism, "The Woman Who Throws Herself at a Man's Head Always Finds Herself at his Feet", there is surely a limit beyond which a comparison even of style alone cannot be stretched. When Mrs. Libbey's hero rose to greet his beloved, "the touch of that little hand which lay for an instant in his clasp set his heart beating and every pulse throbbing as he thought that one day that little hand might be his own". Such a delusion would never disturb one of Mr. Dreiser's ferine lovers, however uncertain of the future he might be.

If this is the style of decadence in America, and if the decadent is really the pathological specimen he is generally considered to be, the nation at large ought to feel grateful to Mr. Waldo Frank for showing us in Rahab how the symptoms can be removed by using the proper syntactical therapy.

Raymon Fouquet

BY HELEN DICK.

In Raymon Fouquet the instinct for pain had always been keener than in most men. The first time that he was aware of the intensity of this love of pain was when he came across a note at the bottom of a page he was reading, telling of a certain sect of men who had hired women to beat them. The ecstasy of the imagined scene filled him with a delight so intolerable that he had almost cried aloud with the agony. In a kind of awe, and a kind of repulsion, and a kind of terror, he swiftly left the book and walked alone for several hours through the woods and swamps of upper Louisiana. He needed to go only a mile from the little settlement to find complete solitude and deep damp forests. As he walked he struggled for some solution. The more obvious one, that he was simply a lascivious male, he shrank from.

It was indeed just this twisting of all life to mean sex, this psychoanalysis, that had indirectly made him repudiate intellectualism and introspection of all kinds, and turn to solitude and the work of men. For nearly a year now he had been superintendent of a gang of negroes cutting out timber in a logging camp.

He resented the indication of abnormality for he was not an abnormal man, and as he walked through the wood the research into his subconsciousness was gradually abandoned as the spring air, the songs of birds, and the memory of a duty that lay ahead of him tomorrow took its place.

Tomorrow he must lead a group of citizens to take Tom away from the authorities. For Tom had committed a crime which no southern community trusts the law to exact payment for. He had murdered a white woman and a child. Raymon Fouquet went over in his mind the details of the crime.

Tom, a big quiet yellow negro, servile among white people, but sneering and nasty to his own kind had worked in Fouquet's gang now for six weeks. He seemed a good worker and had created no open trouble and no one suspected anything.

Then last Sunday—it had happened. Seven shots had roused the resting camp. Two screams paralyzed for an instant every-

one that heard them. They ceased as suddenly as they began and for an incalculable instant the stillness of death held the camp. Then dogs began barking, there were cries of women, and shouts of men. The wife and five year old daughter of the foreman were lying in their front yard dead. Three bullets from an automatic had killed the mother and one had gone straight to the child's heart. They had apparently been shot just as they came out of the house for they lay almost at the foot of the steps.

Instant pursuit had been made, and all night long men had searched the woods, and beat the cane break. They stopped all freight trains on the track, but there was no trace found of the negro Tom. They had no dogs and he escaped. The only information that could be got from the negroes was that Tom was missing; that earlier in the afternoon he had been very drunk and threatened to cut up a negro woman who had been living with him. Then he wandered off and had not been seen again. Their tongues were stiff with terror, but eager to give information. One boy swore he had seen him running across the back yard of the foreman's place immediately after the shot, but upon examination it was found the boy had been asleep nearly a quarter of a mile away when the shots were fired. However, it was surely Tom, for he alone was missing and a negro when he is frightened runs. He uses no scheming or bluff. He "leaves there".

It was to Fouquet that everyone looked for leadership. Tom had worked in his gang and the only man over Fouquet was so insane with grief and desire for revenge that he was untrustworthy. To the white men in the camp there was only one step conceivable, and with a cool concern and deliberate quiet they laid their plans.

Tom would without doubt be caught at Chancey. The police were waiting for him, and it was a junction he could not avoid. On his way to Baton Rouge for trial he would be brought back through Eton Junction only a mile from the camp. There he would go no further. A power stronger than the law would take care of him. Excitement, although repressed and methodical, ran high until word had come one day saying that Tom had been caught and under an armed escort was being conducted to

Baton Rouge. He was on the train that would pass through Eton Junction at three the next afternoon. The citizens of the camp smiled.

The next afternoon, a little group of twenty men led by Fouquet violated the officers of the law by forcibly taking away from them a legal prisoner, tying him to the back of a mule and departing towards the woods, under the astounded eyes of a train full of people bound for Baton Rouge.

On a quiet spot on the Mississippi levee, everything was waiting. The only living human being within two miles was an old negro woman in a cabin about half a mile away. It did not matter about her. The spot was a beautiful one. On the top of the warm green bank 'fragrant with the spring sunshine, was a huge log. At either end stood great piles of brush and dead branches. Three men held Tom while Raymon Fouquet stripped his body. It was powerful and smooth, and the great muscles slipped cleanly beneath the gleaming skin. Naked in the sunlight, it seemed preposterous that men could destroy an organism so vibrant with life, so close to nature and so elemental in its strength. But the face of Tom was stupid and indifferent, like an imbecile animal.

Placing him astride the log they bound him to it, winding his limbs with rope from the ankle to the knees. Then Fouquet asked him,

"Tom, is there anything you want?"

"Boss, I'se mighty hungry—Ah hates to meet ma maker starved!"

Instructions were at once sent to the cabin to prepare a large meal. And after Tom, in a manner that was growing more and more nervous, and with eyes that roved more and more shiftily and wildly from one to another of the men, had eaten, the men rose, bound his arms close against the sides of his body, and piled the brush about him. Over his body they poured oil. Over the brush that was piled as high as his chin they poured oil. Then they lit it.

Fouquet, ever since his fingers had slipped across the bare flesh of the negro as he was taking off his clothes had been trying

to conceal from the others the violent trembling that threatened to possess him. A terrible pleasure was choking his throat, a madness of sensual abandon was sweeping from his knees to his head. He was becoming dizzy, insane. But the touch of the match saved him. With reality came loss of glory. His senses cooled and he watched the spectacle with the same feelings as the other men—a deliberate steeled necessity, a righteous retribution. The flames mounted higher and higher, and terrible cries, deep throaty sounds of anguish tore the softness of the air, the warmth of the sun.

“Oh Gawd, Gawd A’mighty—Ah was drunk—Ah didn’t go to do it—Ah was drunk—Oh Gawd I’m burning like hell fire.”

Unmoved they watched him. They saw the brush burn away and the shrinking body of the negro outlined with fire shone with horrible vividness through the stark black twigs of the sinking pile of brush.

The muscles of his face were hideously contracted and great tears rolled down his scorched cheeks. He had wrenched one arm loose and was trying to hold it up out of the flame. The writhings and twistings of his body told of pain so fierce, so inhuman that it seemed curious that he did not lose consciousness.

Upon Fouquet had settled a protection of indifference. He alone of all men there was not concentrating on the justice of the thing. He was thinking that all this was very unreal and anticlimatical. He was disinterested and bored.

The smell of the burning flesh was growing strong and the cries had sunk to groans and seemed to be dying, started again louder with a terrible strained shriek that made the previous cries insignificant. The quality of this one was beyond the articulation powers of man. It was a sound that only a soul in the extremity of physical torture could utter.

The eyes of the negro with great effort opened and rolling senselessly for several seconds rested finally on Fouquet. The anguish, the intolerable agony in them, startled him.

“Oh Boss, for Gawd’s sake—shoot me—”

There was the sound of a revolver, the burning negro flung himself backwards, and lay quiet in the flames of the brush.

Fouquet was amazed. He saw that all the men were looking at him and he became more amazed than ever. Then he looked down and saw in his hand a revolver that had just been discharged.

He had shot Tom . . .

Before he could think he heard a voice that sneered softly.

"Well, Fouquet, turned yellow?"

Fouquet, who had for several minutes past been very white, whirled and with his gun still in his hand said,

"Who said that?"

No one answered nor turned their eyes from the burning negro, so unexpectedly relieved of the last agony. The men who had said nothing were too surprised to speak, all considering that the man who had spoken should have kept still. They all felt that Fouquet need not have done it—that he—the hardest, most carefully veneered, perhaps the cruelest man among them, had suddenly and inexplicably gone soft. But it did not deserve the name yellow. That would be too near implying the yellowness of themselves, for none of them had been enjoying themselves, and none of them were quite sure that they could have refused the direct cry of Tom.

And so to his question Fouquet received no reply. Dropping his gun back into his pocket, he walked to the smouldering pile, turned the blackening body over with his foot, poured more oil upon it, particularly about the scarcely touched head, where a tiny black mark on the forehead showed where the bullet had entered, piled more brush on and stepped back.

After twenty minutes of feeding the fire silently, the twenty men mounted their horses and rode back to the camp to pronounce their duty done.

AT RANDOM

Water

BY MARY DALLAS STREET.

Sometimes The Reviewer feels that it talks too much about itself. That may or may not be true. What, however, it does spare the community is talking about the things it is asked to. A gentleman of distinction once advised us seriously to conduct "a department of politics, a department that would teach the Southern woman how to vote." Again we were told—with every page we printed proclaiming to us the lack of the one and the presence of the other—that we could not call ourselves alive if we stood for neither Capital nor Labor. And, lastly, we were attacked for not giving "the protest of intelligent women to the insult of prohibition". It was that final phrase, "the insult of prohibition", that came back to me on the day that was R's fault.

It was R's fault because from the moment she got up she would sing 'the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond'.

"It is not," I said, "that I mind your being several notes off the key, or that the tune is hackneyed beyond all words, but you're singing before breakfast and the sky is as gray as your hat. You'll queer the banks beyond all question."

"The hat," said R. "is waterproofed. 'Squtuam,' Regent Street, ten guineas; and if you'll take the high road, Squtuam I'll take—'." I took nothing but flight, and R. followed with a porter and all the bags.

The steamer looked depressed, with everyone on it strainingly hopeful. "Just a mist," they said, "Oh yes, Scotch mist. You know they call rain that—Scotch mist. Ha, ha! The bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond."

"See," I said to R., "the level of your intellect!"

A fat American with the ancient order of Reindeer in his buttonhole stepped on R's foot. "And of my corpus aussi," she said, "Let's awa'."

We 'awa'ed' to the bow of the boat and sat down on a bench where the Scotch mist had condensed into silvery pools. A bell rang; the steamer turned her nose down Loch Lomond. On either side of us the mist lay like silver gauze, like cool smoke, like a cloud come to earth, "Like," said a nasal voice "a damned nuisance." Softly the steamer glided on as every guide book glided her, softly the mist parted on either side, and at the bow and at the stern, softly, softly. Where it touched you it became water. My hat was not 'Asqutuam,' Regent Street, my hat was only dear to me. It dripped and turned and fell about my ears. Softly we glided, softly the mist parted at the steamer's rail. "Beyond," I said to R. "are mountains, or would you have me call them bens? are streams, or would you have me call them burns? are other little lakes, or would you have me call them lochs? with bonnie, bonnie banks!" R. looked at me, and we glided softly on, on and on til we stopped, and through the mist we saw a gang-plank come. "Inversnaid" said a voice, "Change here for the coaches."

There were four coaches with four wet horses each. We paid wet pence to a wet man to remove our luggage from the boat to the coach that was ours. His truck slipped on the path, and my suit-case sat in a puddle. I had never seen a suit-case sitting in a puddle before, and it fascinated me. It was a black suit-case and still wore a large red Cunard tag. Above the tag the mist curled round its handle. The composition struck me as entrancingly like a depressed Turner, but the man took my gaze as disapproval and said sorrowfully that his hands were wet. I believed him, and we ascended the coach.

We drove eleven miles to Stonelacher. The land affected the mist so that it turned to rain. I remember the drops ran off the coachman's nose. I remember the umbrella of the considerate female on the box seat. I remember at the top of some pass I heard through the rain a bag-pipe and saw a figure whose clothes clung to it playing, and wondered dully why. I remember that an Englishwoman beside me looking at the figure said, "Fancy:" just that and nothing more.

The steamer at Stonelacher was waiting for us, already full. It sat, ringed by rain, or gray water that they said was Loch

Katrine, and it was to take us to the Trossachs. About the round base of its funnel there was a squar ething with corners high enough to sit on. Also above those corners was a strip of roof for what we could not tell, but gathered our luggage under it and sat against the funnel; and the edge of the roof dripped on our hats so that we leaned forward to avoid it, and it went down our necks. I buttoned tight the collar of my Burberry and locked the stable door with the drop in. It ran around like the mercury in "Pigs in Clover" until I leant against the funnel and squashed it flat. The brim of R's Asqutuam' hat became full and ran over. "Do you remember," I said, "how the water came down at Ladore?" R. left me, and I sat, and fell to thinking of Sir Walter Scott's monument in Edinburgh. I had always wondered why there was so much roof to him, now I saw. Miles and miles of roof straight up with gothic arch and flying buttress and he was sitting under it all nice and dry. My left boot began to leak—could anything ever go a longer way than water in one's shoes? Mine seemed ten acres broad—good lush land with a river bottom.

The captain said, "Ellen's Isle," and I saw a darkness through the rain. Behind me the nasal voice said "She can have it," and I giggled hysterically in my throat. Sunlight and shadow and green-gold leaf, the Knight of Snowden, James Fitz-James? Did knights ever mildew, could a person mildew, could I? I saw R. returning, and there was a light upon her face. I had not believed that even her spirit could keep itself undamped and yet here was triumph.

"Do you know," she said, "do you know there is a hotel at the Trossachs? The captain says a half a mile from the dock, a good, dry hotel."

An hour later we found ourselves in it when we had thought to be coaching again on the road to Aberfoyle. But here we strode upon a dry carpet, and there were windows and a fire. The rain was lovely through the windows, long lovely streaks of gray and just beyond, near enough for me to make faces at it, a brook flowed babbling into Loch Katrine. Through my hat I had asked for a room with a fire: and to every statement and inquiry I had answered Yes, that I wanted a fire; so that they

had become wonderingly impressed and the one they gave us leapt and roared upon the hearth. We spread before it our coats, our suits, our rugs, our boots, our hats and I the suitcase where it had sat, and then we went down to dinner. We were late and at our table was a Scotchwoman, high colored, tightly buttoned in black satin, next to her, her daughter. They had wine and the light fell golden in the glasses. Now the mother ordered whiskey and soda, and it too was golden as she drank. We fell upon the hot and savory soup. She eyed us and whispered to her daughter "Americans", and we hoped we had not bitten the soup to tell her so. The head-waiter came, bowing solicitous.

"And what to drink, madame?"

"Water," we said, "just water."

I heard a gurgle. The Scotch woman was choking. She gazed at the windows where the rain poured down, she gazed at us.

"Water," she said, "My God, water!"

West is West

BY PLEASANTON CONQUEST, JR.

The Dictionary makes the positive statement that an Avenue is a "Long, broad and imposing street." With that definition staring him in the face, the temerity of him who stood Godfather, when West Avenue was christened, should have earned him recognition. Our street is actually three squares long, but it is believed that the City Fathers—who possibly owned a Dictionary—attempted to modify the error of our ignorant but enthusiastic sponsor, and therefore, numbered our divisions from 1000 to 1500 inclusive, giving the "Avenue" a fictitious length of six blocks.

The first two sections, as one enters from the lower end, are lined with houses of two stories only, each with its grass plot about the size of a baby blanket in front. At intervals, along the outer edges of the sidewalks, occur little rectangles of

earth intended by the City Engineering Department to sustain small maples and other shade trees. Their real purpose is to provide the materials for mud pies, the manufacture of which, after a rain, is the Avenue's chief industrial activity. The homes bear a striking similarity, one to the other, avoiding monotony by a hair's breadth, and but for an occasional outburst of originality, in the form of a hedge or a flower box, it is difficult for the new resident to locate his own domicile. Grass-plots, trees and houses are on such a uniformly small scale, that West Avenue gives the general impression of being a toy street. The first stranger within our gates to exclaim rapturously "It is so exactly like Pomander Walk" little knew upon what fertile soil his parallel dropped. At first, some of us, who did not know whether Pomander Walk was a girl's name or a new dance step, acquiesced uneasily in the description, and thought it wonderful, without knowing why. Now, we not only expect, but demand the comparison, and register anger and disappointment, if it is not made.

Scandal, rarely, if ever, originates in Pomander Walk. If its residents feel the urge to act "scandalous" they go elsewhere to obey that impulse, and the street's impeccable purity is preserved. In fact, a half hour, or even a whole one elapses, before any of us are aware that a scandal has been committed. On the other hand, Old Dame Rumor never sets sail upon a voyage from anywhere to anywhere, without making "The Avenue" her first port of call. She may be very scantily clad when she first appears in our midst, but when she leaves us, the Old Dame is properly and durably garbed from head to heel, to travel down the ages without change.

The Free and Sovereign State of West Avenue, while presenting a united front to the rest of the world, is a very loosely joined Confederation, after all, for, like all Gaul, it is divided into three parts, each having its own manners, customs, and social observances.

One enters at the Harrison Street end, (where the mail box is) and finds the quiet conservatism typical of the Ford Sedan. The children play decorously on the sidewalks, and if they ever cross the street, are invariably led by hand. The casual observer marvels that all of these children seem to be exactly

the same age and size. This Sedan block is a peaceful one, as frequently evidenced by the fact that sundry somnolent residents thereof slumber unmolested on their front porches in the afternoon, a proceeding that would be absolutely impossible on our square, at any time prior to midnight, without the aid of anaesthetics. The Sedan block is Victorian, it is sedate, it is exclusive. The houses turn their backs upon their lowlier neighbors, and even chimneys have been seen to lean haughtily away from other chimneys, presumably of inferior origin. It is a block where men have Sunday suits, and it is supposed the ladies wear high-necked nighties.

One crosses an intersecting street, upon which nobody lives, and enters immediately an atmosphere suffused with the rattling clamor of a second-hand Flivver. That is the 1100 Block. It can best be visualized by thinking of an elongated schoolyard at Recess. There are quiet, childless houses, and quiet dignified people on this block, but amid our hubbub and confusion, they are lost, and simply become background.

Communications were formerly carried on by means of postmen and telephone wires, but these antiquated methods have been almost entirely superseded by a system of broadcasting the human voice, especially in the numerous interchanges of query and answer between parent and child, and minor gossip between neighbors. On sunny afternoons, each porch becomes a center of parental authority, whose mandates are issued in tones audible at great distances, and both sides of our entire block cannot fail to profit from the exchange of recipes and fashion notes hurled back and forth across the street. The Falls of Niagara are reputed to produce the deepest tone in the realm of Nature, and by contrast, Pomander Walk undoubtedly produces the highest. The squeak of Kiddie-cars, the clock-like tick-tock of stilts, the staccato thuds of Pogo Sticks, and the shuffle of the Hop-sotchers, blend with the incessant juvenile and adult vociferations into a high note that is distinctive, and, in time, beats pleasantly on our ears.

While West Avenue, in Winter, is sociable enough, and true neighborliness blows with the cold wind, or falls with the snow, it is in spring, summer and early fall that its true delights are made manifest. Gone, then, is the thin veil of formality that is

only apparent when doors and windows are shut. On other streets, decorous groups of grown-ups foregather on porches and steps, but it is only on Pomander Walk that the citizens, classified metaphorically as tax-payers, avail themselves of their full rights and privileges, by occupying the pavements with chairs and settees, much to the indignation of the perambulating outlander, but to the vast satisfaction and comfort of the homefolks. Watermelon feasts have been known to overflow into the very street itself. Baby carriages, bicycles, chairs, and cushions have been known to spend days and nights on our sidewalks without once seeking the shelter of a friendly roof. This is a compliment to the honesty of those who use our street, but is often a severe tax on the nerves and shins of the late wayfarer with thoughts of bandits in his mind, for without warning, he may find himself grappled viciously about the knees by a pair of handle-bars, or become involved in a rough and tumble battle with a rocking-chair. Ours is, perhaps, the only street in America where the automobilist wears a look of abject terror, while the pedestrian, be he man or child, pursues the diagonal tenor of his way, sans peur et sans reproche.

Some there be, who object to the apparent fact that one's neighbors seem to possess detailed information of one's every thought, word and deed, but, after all, there are no family skeletons in the cupboards of our little two-story houses, indeed, very few cupboards; and the old resident soon learns to take comfort in the knowledge that he, himself, can never know all that his neighbors know about him. What if one does hear, from across the street, in the stillness of the night, an outraged, sleepy, feminine voice cry "Wake up, Barclay, you've got all the covers?" We can all extend our personal sympathy to the bereaved one, or at any rate, we could, before the advent of the twin bed era.

What if we do see, in the early morning hours, one diaphanously clad matron protrude from her second story window, a broom, bearing on its broad expanse of straw a precious bottle of milk of magnesia, which alkaline is eagerly grasped by an equally diaphanous next door neighbor, whose infant's welfare

demands it. We have all had, or will have, an acidulous infant, and are all prone to take the easiest way.

A Spring Sunday morning is our block's apex of social activity. Then it is that the mothers and sisters congregate on sunny porches, and converse as only mothers and sisters can, with now and then a "My dear, do you know?" or a "turn around and let's see the back of it" shooting up like rockets, from out of the steady hum of the conversational fireworks. This steady hum is composed of the interesting gossip that each wife will impart to her husband, before the day is out, thus accounting for the well-known fact that there are no secrets on West Avenue. The fathers and brothers, ever and anon, repair inside to perform some mysterious rite, that whatever it is, adds a touch of triumph to their eventual emergence into the sunlight, and they seem to brighten as they take their leave. During the performance of these indoor mysteries, sundry sudden outbursts of laughter indicate that each husband will have something to relate to his wife, later. Thus are the marital accounts balanced, and there are still no secrets on West Avenue.

Between our middle division, and the western end of Pomander Walk, there is a great gulf fixed, for that is the rich Limousine section. Most of us have only penetrated the outskirts of the 1500 block, and it is frankly admitted that our knowledge of its manners and customs is derived mainly from the observations of citizenesses from our block, who from time to time, journey to the Hospital which guards the upper portal of "The Avenue." We know that they have three story houses, Colonial Doorways, evergreens in boxes, enclosing brick-floored porches. They have a full grown Apartment House, which they call a "Hall" of some kind. We hear that they often have more than one bathroom, steam heat, and furnace men. How they must scorn our hot air heaters, and look down upon us, who crank them ourselves, for we have no self-starters in the shape of furnace men. We understand that the wealthy from other sections of the city actually go visiting on the Limousine square, but simply go slumming on ours.

Regardless of caste, however, nearly all of our residents enter their novitiate bringing with them a suggestion of rice

and old shoes, but on the inevitable return trip down the Avenue, from the hospital, they automatically become "Old Inhabitants" and are immediately eligible to speak familiarly to Doctor Newton, to borrow castor oil, and to exchange measles and experiences with their neighbors. Whether the hospital was built to conform to the needs and inclinations of West Avenue or whether the needs and inclinations of West Avenue are direct results of the proximity of the hospital, is a moot question; but a glance at our street on a bright afternoon impresses us with the fact that both Pomander Walk and the Hospital are in strategically strong positions.

Ours is a great street, and Pomander is very much inclined to be proud of her Walk, and to glory in it. In the course of a conversation in a street car, the other day, one was heard to say, "Are you living in the City, or in the Suburbs, now?" To which the Pomander answered, haughtily, "Neither. I live on West Avenue."

Reunion Study

BY EDWARD ALLEN CLEATON.

Very furiously, and not harmoniously, the military band played "Dixie"; a woman wearing a gray coat and a khaki hat stood on the platform and exhorted the crowd to sing louder; in an overflow of exuberance two veterans began a clog dance, their movements suggestive rather of rheumatism than rhythm; others felt the contagion and joined in, prancing or dancing in a sort of corybantic frenzy up and down the aisles of the auditorium; the three thousand people, gathered for the Confederate Veterans' reunion, sang and laughed and cheered.

Glancing casually over this tumultuous crowd while meditating on the story I was going to write for the afternoon paper, my attention was caught and held by an old man who sat calm and unruffled, like a rock in a tossing sea. He alone showed no

emotion when the defiant "Rebel yell" rang out and when "The Bonny Blue Flag" set the audience again cheering. Regarding him more carefully, I observed that he was an Indian—the only representative of his race in the hall. His appearance was true to type. Heavily built and muscular was he, with broad shoulders and an expansive chest. Beneath bangs of coal-black hair eyes that were rather murky stared steadfastly forward. Swarthy skin was drawn taut over high cheek-bones. His mouth was firmly cut, and sensitive. The uniform he wore failed utterly to swallow his individuality; in that vast throng he was as distinctive as a Rembrandt in a group of futile imitations.

I noticed that he was making a determined effort to understand the spirit of the occasion—to enjoy the reunion with the men he fought with more than half a century ago. He clapped his hands in a perfunctory manner when others applauded an allusion a speaker made to Robert E. Lee; he rose to his feet with the crowd when "The Star Spangled Banner" was played; and he leaned forward attentively while a speaker delivered an address that to him was plainly incomprehensible. But all his efforts failed; his nature was not susceptible to the influences that touched fire in his pale-skin friends. He looked lonely, this Redskin did, in that cheering unfamiliar mob, and I think he must have longed very poignantly for his own people and the life and customs that were before the Indian was herded up to live on government reservations. On his usually inscrutable face I think I detected a fleeting expression of dark wonderment and dismay that this civilization had supplanted his. It may have been a trick of my imagination, but I think I read his mind, and he was thinking of a wigwam silhouetted against a sky that was blue as the sea—of silence that was broken only by the nocturne of a mocking bird—of a boat-shaped moon that floated lazily on clouds of foam—And the band struck up "Dixie" again, and some of the men were eating ice cream cones, and outside a street-car clanged by.

Things in General

The Reviewer would not dream of making introductory remarks about Miss Amy Lowell, of Boston, but George Stevens is a young Atlantian who is now at Harvard, and who writes for the Literary Review. Lynn Riggs lives in Oklahoma, and publishes a great deal of verse in the Smart Set and other magazines. Vincent Starrett lives in Chicago, where he edits *The Wave*, an interesting young magazine, and contributes to many older magazines. He is also by way of being one of the discoverers of Arthur Machen.

Carl Van Vechten, the author of *Peter Whiffle*, is now writing another book with a name which would be incredible if it weren't true. He was urged to modify his assertion in the current *Pastiches* that no little theatre or magazine should last more than two years, but refused. He wrote us privately, however, that no magazine except *The Reviewer* should last more than two years. Allen W. Porterfield is a member of the staff of the *New York Evening Post*, and a contributor to the *Bookman*. He has written book reviews for many years and knows whereof he speaks. DuBose Heyward writes verse for most of the magazines, and is secretary of the Poetry Society of Charleston, South Carolina, where he lives. Harold Randolph is head of the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore. Frederick B. Eddy, who lives in New York, has appeared before in *The Reviewer*. Achmed Abdullah's collection of short stories of the East, *Alien Souls*, followed his novel, *Night Drums*, in September. Robert Nathan's verse is known to a discriminating public now, through his last book, *Youth Grows Old*. Julia Peterkin, who frequently writes sketches of her own Lang Syne Plantation for this magazine, is contemplating a book of the same sketches, which have attracted wide attention from readers and writers. Virginia Taylor McCormick lives in Norfolk, and is a frequent contributor of poetry and prose to the magazines. Her book of verse, *Stardust and Gardens*, appeared last year. Hansell Baugh, it is unnecessary

to repeat, is an Atlanta young man, and Pleasonton Conquest, Jr., is a Richmond business man, who is talking about his own street, and Edward Cleaton is a Richmond newspaper man, and incidentally, a shockingly young one. Helen Dick lives in Memphis, Tennessee. It occurs to the editors on glancing through this issue, that we really seem to be intentionally Southern this time. But we aren't. It was accidental.

The Centaur Book Shop, 1224 Chancellor Street, Philadelphia, asks us to announce that they will publish a series of Centaur Bibliographies of Modern American Authors during the coming year. The first, that of Joseph Hergesheimer with a foreword by himself, is just out, and those now in preparation are Willa Cather, and Sherwood Anderson, with a foreword by Dr. E. D. McDonald of the Drexel Institute. These will be followed by James Branch Cabell, Stephen Crane, Edgar Saltus, H. L. Mencken, James Huneker, Ambrose Bierce and Theodore Dreiser.

ABOUT BOOKS

Opinions Prompt and Belated

BY HUNTER STAGG.

1.

H. L. Mencken has expressed his ideas upon an extraordinary number of things in his new volume of *Prejudices—the Third Series*. It really matters very little under what headings he distributes his flood of opinions—it must be awfully nice to have so many!—for he has the good fortune to be a man who can (and probably will some day) contrive with small effort to give you his convictions upon the current taste in teddies in an essay professedly devoted to the Advantages of Recognized Slavery.

Still, opinions must be grouped, and Mr. Mencken has in the present volume provided the following nucleuses: 1. On Being an American: 2. Huneker: A Memory: 3. Footnote on Criticism: 4. *Das Kapital*: 5. *Ad Imaginem Dei Creavit Illum*: 6. Star-Spangled Men: 7. The Poet and his Art: 8. Five Men at Random: 9. The Nature of Liberty: 10. The Novel: 11. The Forward-Looker: 12. Memorial Service: 13. Education: 14. Types of Men: 15. The Dismal Science: 16. Matters of State: 17. Reflections on the Drama: 18. Advice to Young Men: 19. *Suite Americane*:—obviously too broad and rocky a field for one meek reviewer to survey without misadventures. Alone, I have had, altogether, a delightful time stumbling about in it, but I shall expose as few of my mishaps as possible.

One of them, perhaps the worst, was in the first essay, *On Being An American*, where the author neglected no opportunity to discourse upon the war. Frankly, Mr. Mencken, on the subject of the war, makes me sick in the stomach. And this is not because I cherish any particular animosity toward the Teutonic race, which, I am sure, produces under normal conditions an average of humane—and inhumane—citizens comparable to that of most any other race. Nor is it because I am bemused with the

admiration of my own, the Anglo-Saxon race, which, I am well aware, is not abnormally backward in the production of barbarians: nor because I place any faith in Leagues of Nations, Peace Conferences, and the like: nor because I am at all a public-spirited man, affronted by Mr. Mencken's perfectly veracious summary of American politics, morals, intelligence, and so on. It is simply that I weary of seeing Mencken's perfectly righteous determination to tear the bogey legend from the figure of Germany lead him to turn and hang it upon the United States; lead him, in short, to commit a stupidity not greatly different in kind from that which has, from the beginning of the war, so aroused his indignation. In removing the several coats of black paint—some of them at least—from Germany's hide, it is not necessary to transfer them to that of America, a country dammed for many things, but which—one is moved to remind Mr. Mencken, answering his tone and general trend rather than actual statement—did not, after all, start the blooming mess.

Apart from the passages devoted to the war, the essay *On Being an American* offers the same stimulating reading which one is accustomed to find in the books of *Prejudices*. So does the handsome appreciation of Huneker, in which is introduced, without any specific cataloguing, an equally gratifying depreciation of many other people. So does the paper on *Education*, and the paper called *Ad Imaginem Dei Creavit Illum*—particularly that—and the one labelled *The Nature of Liberty*. Especially interesting to me, too, is Mencken's *Footnote on Criticism*, the only criticism of criticism which holds water that I know, since the burden of it is the establishing of critics, as distinct from reviewers, as creative artists. This essay, however, belongs among the less important, as does the group of sketches called *Five Men at Random*, also especially interesting to me—partly because of the words upon Lincoln, which, having looked upon the Temple at Washington, if somebody hadn't said soon in print I think I would have bursted; and partly because of the sketch of Frank Harris, a man of whom, belonging to the wrong generation, I have never been able to construct a definite picture, and whose biography of Oscar Wilde is the sum of my acquaintance with his work, even that having been read, unfortunately, at an age

when I was more absorbed in finding out just what Wilde had done than in noting the excellence of the work.

Having few opinions and no knowledge of many of Mr. Mencken's subjects, I can offer no assurance of the soundness of his ideas. But if ideas are stimulating what does it matter whether they are sound or not? (Prejudices: Third Series. H. L. Mencken. Alfred A. Knopf.)

2.

Young America is certainly a difficult child. I mean, of course, Young Intellectual America: it is hard, in this business, to bear in mind that there is any other.

Young Intellectual America, then, is a difficult child, and I suppose that, like many other difficult children, he will come out all right in the end. But meantime he is a great trial to those of the neighbors who, unable to ignore, must criticise. For when he knows how to write, as he so amazingly often does, he knows nothing to write about; and when, as occasionally happens, he does know something to write about, he doesn't know how to write. And neither of these conditions deter him in the least from writing. Sometimes, as in the case of Mr. Stephen Vincent Benét, there is a vacillation between these two conditions—and Mr. Benét, by the way, is also found now and again in the third state of knowing at one and the same time, both what to write and how. But in *Young People's Pride* he appears to have forgotten—temporarily, I hope—the "how" part of it, so that one wonders, inevitably, where Mr. Benét went to school, and if his instructor in grammar is still alive. In all charity one hopes not, for there is that about his former pupil's new novel which must shake the unfortunate pedagogue's career to its very foundation, convict him in his own eyes of having mischosen his calling, and people his bedside with harrowing visions of students departed from him totally unimpressed with the simplest of the rules which it is his business to impart.

Mr. Benét does, it is true, acknowledge at intervals the period, but his recognition of the comma is the most grudging I have ever seen. And with this youthful snobbery may also be

classified his haphazard disposal of clauses, which is responsible for the early and ineradicable impression in at least one reader's mind, that his hero, Oliver Crowe, had eyes remarkably placed not only under heavy tortoise-shell glasses but also under his mouth:—"a mouth", furthermore, "that is not weak in the least but somehow burdened by a pressure of wings, the pressure of the kind of dream which will not release the flesh it inhabits always and agonizes often until it is given perfect body and so does not release it until such flesh has ceased".

The foregoing selection is but half of the whole sentence describing Oliver. And the whole is but one of many of the same kind—a kind whose impenetrability convicts the writer, after all, not so much of ignorance as of plain carelessness. A pianist, for example, knows how difficult it is deliberately to play a familiar passage incorrectly, easy as it may be to fall into errors from carelessness, and an artist knows how much easier it is to reproduce the normal lines of the human body than to draw, premeditatedly, a distorted figure. And if one gave any thought to it, even so little thought as one gives to the composition of one's letters, it would be almost impossible to achieve such a sentence as: "It had taken a good deal of quiet obstinacy on the part of the whole family to get Oliver (newly jilted) to accept Peter Piper's invitation—Mrs. Crowe, who was understanding, knew at what cost—the cost of a man who has lost his hand's first appearance in public with the stump unbandaged—but—", and so forth and so on for five or six more lines.

"—the cost of a man who has lost his hand's first appearance in public with the stump unbandaged—". Oh, Mr. Benét, have a heart, have a heart! You set one hungering for the simple clarity, the childish lucidity of the later Henry James.

Apart from such flaws as these, *Young People's Pride* is a very entertaining book, and a far better one than Mr. Benét's first and much discussed novel, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, published a year ago. For one thing, the new novel, notwithstanding its title, is not nearly so good an example of young people's pride as was that weary, overweighted, self-conscious earlier volume. It is modest, and its scrupulously planned, swiftly moving story grows, at the right moment, positively exciting. Moreover, it

sounds a most welcome note in the literature of flapperhood, for it is neither anxious nor critical, but humorously sympathetic. It was entirely worth writing, if only as a counter to Mr. Scott Fitzgerald, for Mr. Benét refuses to see in the flapper a menace to the race. His young people, though resembling outwardly the overwhelming figure built up by the newspapers and various other novelists, cherish many of the old ideals and sentimentalities formerly associated with youth. They are, in short, merely young people with a normal zest for living, who come out all right in the end.

And there is a good deal in the book which convinces you that Mr. Benét will come out all right in the end, too, if he will only hunt up his old grammar book, and give a little more attention to his galleys. (*Young People's Pride*. By Stephen Vincent Benét. Henry Holt & Co.)

Mr. John Peale Bishop and Mr. Edmund Wilson, Jr., are two other moderately youthful people whose names appear together, this fall, upon the suitably black and lavender colored book called *The Undertaker's Garland*. This bright volume contains fourteen—ah—pieces in all, each author being responsible for seven. Mr. Bishop's contributions are, *Lucifer*, *The Death of a Dandy*, *The Funeral of an Undertaker*, *The Madman's Funeral*, *The Death of God*, all poems; and *The Funeral of Mary Magdalene*, a playlet, and *Resurrection*, a prose sketch. Mr. Wilson provided the Preface and two prose sketches—*Emily in Hades* and *The Death of a Soldier*; and four poems—*The Death of the Last Centaur*, *The Funeral of a Romantic Poet*, *The Death of an Efficiency Expert*, and the Epilogue.

On the whole the prose work is better than the verse, though Mr. Bishop's *The Death of a Dandy* ranks high—higher than any of his other verses and higher than all of Mr. Wilson's verse. And on the whole Mr. Wilson, who wrote more prose, shows up better than Mr. Bishop, though the latter's *Resurrection* is a striking thing, and his *Funeral of Mary Magdalene* is not bad. The only trouble with the *Magdalene* piece is that, without any suggestion of imitation, it reminds you too much of the things that remind you of the Oscar Wilde's *Salome*—just as Boris

Artzibasheff's meritoriously dreadful illustrations for the volume remind you of the artists who remind you of Aubrey Beardsley.

But there is in *The Undertaker's Garland* nothing so good as Mr. Wilson's *The Death of a Soldier*, or Mr. Wilson's *Emily in Hades*, or his preface, for Mr. Wilson's prose style is a smooth and engaging thing, though not without flaws traceable to carelessness. I do not know when anything has so cheered me up as did this orgy of death and destruction, lamentation and despair. (*The Undertaker's Garland*. By John Peale Bishop and Edmund Wilson, Jr. Alfred A. Knopf.)

3.

Inasmuch as Edith Wharton's latest novel is still riding happily in the Best Seller Bus, perhaps it is not too late to pass a word upon it here. It will not, I am sorry to say, be a good word. For the first time in Mrs. Wharton's company I have met with recurring stretches of boredom. No, on second thought, there was one tedious stretch in *The Age of Innocence*, until now Mrs. Wharton's least worthy novel. But if one wishes to know what an inferior work *The Glimpses of the Moon* is, one has only read, or re-read her two novels most akin to it in matter, *The House of Mirth*, and *The Custom of the Country*.

I will not speak of the difference in style—it is sufficiently great to ignore. But I do lament, loudly, the cheapness of Mrs. Wharton's new colors, and that she paints so flat a surface with them. Also it is hard not to protest when one sees this particular writer playing tricks with her characters, altering their personalities and their most fundamental qualities to suit the needs of her plot. Surely she, of all people, knows that such things are not done in literature. There characters must always be in character, and their acts and development must be the logical result of what has gone before. Inconsistencies there may be in *Life*, but not in *Fiction*. That is one of the nicest things about fiction. It is the one world in which we can say with conviction and finality "he, or she, would never have done *that*". And when an old dependable like Mrs. Wharton begins to make her characters do *that*, it rather breaks up your morale. I, for one, slumped considerably when the beautifully intelligent Stref-

ford, the one oasis in a desert of uninteresting people, was converted with inadequate explanations from his creator, into a creature sufficiently stupid and pompous not to constitute a real difficulty in the business of ending the story as Mrs. Wharton thought the public would like it to end. The paltry little heroine and her insufferable self-righteous husband were not for a moment worth the high-handed sacrifice of Strefford's intelligence—though even his was only remarkable in contrast to the others'. And, besides, the book is an utterly false one, anyway. (*The Glimpses of the Moon*. By Edith Wharton. D. Appleton & Co.)

And speaking of Edith Wharton, it is to her that Sinclair Lewis has dedicated his new novel, *Babbitt*. Well, *Main Street* was dedicated to James Branch Cabell and Joseph Hergesheimer. It is one way, I suppose, for literary poles to meet.

Babbitt is *Cytherea* re-written by a newspaper reporter. And newspaper reporters should not try to write *Cythereas*.

Nevertheless there are long stretches when one can forget that *Babbitt* is *Cytherea* re-written by a newspaper reporter, therefore *Babbitt* is not ridiculous. On the contrary, *Babbitt* is, for its school, amazingly good.

Babbitt has a few technical faults too trivial to mention. *Babbitt* has other faults which are faults of the school, and therefore virtues of the individual book.

Babbitt is veracious—as veracious as a kodak picture of a sandflat.

With judicious skipping, *Babbitt* is not uninteresting.

But I do not like *Babbitt*. I did not like *Main Street*—what I read of it. Yet I like *Babbitt* better than I liked *Main Street*.

And not only because it is shorter. (*Babbitt*. By Sinclair Lewis. Harcourt, Brace & Co.)

4.

Undoubtedly the worst novel of the early Fall season—the worst, that is, which chance has placed upon the “prominent” list—is Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson's *This Freedom*. It is even

worse than *If Winter Comes*—but I see no occasion for further comment upon Mr. Hutchinson and his books after the statement of Mr. Burton Rascoe in the *New York Tribune* of September, that “there is no more wretched writer of English in the trade of novel writing than this third-rate journeyman whom injudicious criticism has, somehow, hoisted into the ridiculous position of a claimant to literary homage”. These words appear to sum up the case pretty fairly, and I, for one, shall add nothing to them. Besides, I am rather tired of bawling out Mr. Hutchinson.

This *Freedom*, however, by its prominence, had the effect of turning me to less heralded volumes for some really good reading—for example, *The Ghost Girl*, a posthumous work of Edgar Saltus. One might go far and find no better book, of its kind, than *The Ghost Girl*—and that not so much because of its plot either. The plot of *The Ghost Girl* might, indeed, easily be bettered, as might those of many of Mr. Saltus’ other mystery stories. But then Mr. Saltus was an artist: a dealer in horrors, it was his pleasure to put them over more by the magic of his style than by their own mad force. And though in this last fantastic work he could have woven his cloth more ingeniously the broidery is as skillfully contrived as ever, and the colors as glowing, so that one follows the pattern with more eagerness and suspense than many a more deeply evolved affair might command. It is an interesting contact, this mind which chose deliberately to make literature of penny-dreadful materials—and to leaven it always with a faintly jeering smile. (*The Ghost Girl*. By Edgar Saltus. Boni & Liveright.)

Another volume of more than ordinary interest is *The Old House*, from the Hungarian of Cecile Tormay. The translation being sympathetic, one readily understands the great success of this book when it was published in Hungary several years ago, and why it was successively rendered into German, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch and English, and has finally been brought out in America. Its author, like the author of *The Ghost Girl*, is an artist, though the two have no other point of contact—unless it be that they both employ, religiously, the short sentence. Miss Tormay’s use of the short sentence is, indeed, one of the most

remarkable things of its kind I have ever encountered. At first, for a dozen pages or so, it is annoying, then like a series of quick, soft beats upon a drum, it begins to reach you as a continuous roll in which the individual beats cannot be distinguished. The rapid succession of periods is lost in the larger rhythm, and the only actual breaks are the chapter divisions.

There is another and equally curious effect achieved in Miss Tormay's book, which tells of the rise and fall of the great house of Ulwing. The story does not lack dramatic incident—on the contrary, it is crowded with war and death, love and birth, towering achievement and heavy downfall. Yet all these things make no sound, there is no noise of action in the book. And this is partly because achievement is related with a foreknowledge of defeat, frustration with afterknowledge of its inevitability; and partly because events are offered to you either through the emotionally detached eyes of the very young, or the intellectually detached eyes of the very old, and with the wistful charm of both. In the middle period turmoil is dimmed by the weakened spirit of old Christopher Ulwing in his grandchildren, a spirit capable, in them, no longer of the will to do, but only of the will to wish. The Old House is not a happy book, but it is a notable book—and notable books convey happiness, whatever their themes. (The Old House. By Cecile Tormay. Robert M. McBride & Co.)

Miss Sophie Kerr has labored and brought forth yet another novel which makes exceptionally good reading. Only, I wish she had chosen another name for it. *One Thing Is Certain* messes up a sentence awfully in a magazine where it is forbidden to surround titles of books with quotation marks.

The scene of Miss Kerr's book is the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the time the latter quarter of the last century, and a most interesting picture she gives of that place and that time. The theme of the book is the well tried one of loveless marriages, but Miss Kerr trusted to manner and method for novelty, and her trust was not misplaced. Her straightforwardness, her down-right—and unaffected—honesty produces an effect even more unusual in her dealings with certain unpleasant scenes than in her character delineations. For, unlike many of our "frank" novelists she treats unpleasantness not as one who hunts it out and calcu-

lates upon its increasing her sales, but with a sort of take-it-for-grantedness which I, for one, regard as a matter for gratitude. I have particularly in mind, as Miss Kerr's opposite, the popular Mr. Robert Keable, who cannot describe an intimate scene between persons of the opposite sex, even husband and wife, without conveying somehow a sound of smacking lips, and writing plainly between the lines "*What a devil I am to put all this in a book!*" (One Thing Is Certain. By Sophie Kerr. George H. Doran Co.)

Mr. Keable's latest book, *The Mother of All Living*, I shall deny myself the pleasure of reviewing. I did not, indeed, read much of it, could not somehow muster up the expected excitement over the conversations upon marital relations, or such scenes as when hubby kneels, in pajamas, beside wifie's bed, and wifie whispers coily, "Want to come in a minute?", and when the beautiful maiden, having bathed naked in the sea, stretches herself upon the beach and trickles handfuls of golden sand upon her glistening thighs. However, the book would make excellent reading for a child of ten or twelve, offering some real satisfaction to the curiosity of that age.

It would not matter so much if Mr. Keable was a bad little boy writing on the back fence, but it is always perfectly evident that he is a grown man who somehow finds joy in that occupation. Personally I prefer my vulgarities straight, as they are given you by Mr. Ben Hecht, who opens his new novel, *Gargoyles*, with the simple statement of his hero's emergence from "Madam Minnie's house of ill fame at five o'clock on a Sabbath May morning", and a more or less explicit account of the young man's engagements there. This kind of writing, it seems to me, is at least wholesome, if not necessarily entertaining. And Mr. Hecht, for all his nice scorn of sugar coating, is not always entertaining to me, I confess. He becomes, in fact, definitely tedious when he diverges too extensively from narrative into character analysis, where he is disposed to mistake for a new characteristic what is really just a new way of stating characteristics already described two or three times before.

Nevertheless, *Gargoyles* is a forceful book, which no one interested in modern fiction can afford to ignore. In it Mr.

Hecht sets himself to expose a network of repressions, twisted motives, hypocrisies underlying the apparently serene lives of one George Bazine, lawyer and politician, his widowed mother, his two sisters, their husbands, lovers and hangers-on: a fruitful field, surely, but one which, considering the Bazines in their aspect of a typical family, cannot be said to be untouched. It is, however, untouched in the manner of Ben Hecht, a man whose style is without subtlety, and whose methods are crude, but whose personality is of the kind likely to make its impression on current literature. (*Gargoyles*. By Ben Hecht. Boni & Liveright.)

Along with Miss Kerr's novel, I received from the Doran Company a book of derisive criticisms of life, human nature, and some recent resounding events, most engagingly disguised as short stories. This book is called *The Legends of Smokeover*, and is the work of an Englishman, L. P. Jacks, whom I never happened to hear of before though there seem to be other books to his credit. Or maybe discredit. I do not know. Not having looked him up, I remain in the position of not knowing what I ought to think of him, while knowing perfectly well what I do think of him. This not knowing what you ought to think of a writer can be very awkward. I, for example, do not mind, in the least, confessing to a low taste—so long as I know it is low.

Well, at any rate, I must commit myself upon Mr. Jacks, for whom I find I have a taste. He possesses a wild (within certain bounds) imagination, and a style flexible and swift enough to keep up with that imagination—and get ahead of it too, sometimes, if the truth be told. A limber mind and a limber tongue are pleasing things, especially if their bent is toward satire, and in his thin but sufficient guise of a fictionist Mr. Jacks presents and scores post-war England in a fashion no less entertaining than revealing. (*The Legends of Smokeover*. By L. P. Jacks. George H. Doran Co.)

Julian Street brings out this year a novel, and, as usual with Mr. Street, has put less weight in it than he puts in his books of travel. All the same, *Rita Coventry* is an entertaining story, and one which will certainly be delivered across the counter to a large number of readers. This, indeed, goes without saying, as its heroine is a beautiful prima donna of loose and uncertain

affections. Properly speaking, however, it has no real heroine, but a—well, leading man, let us say, since the word hero would be, in this case, euphemism out of all bounds. But, with May Sinclair, and the author of *Vera*, and so many of the other women writers turning the vials of their scorn upon man, why, oh why has Mr. Street, himself a man, turned traitor and exposed such a character as this new leading man of his? After all, the men drawn by the vengeful women novelists are usually extreme. One can always find enough differences between one's self and them to console one for the resemblances. But Mr. Street's man is too terrifyingly average for comfort. We can only cry *Mea Culpa*, and somewhat absolved by this, rejoice when he gets his from Rita Coventry, and goes crawling back to the lady who, when Rita appeared on the scene, had got hers from him. (*Rita Coventry*. By Julian Street. Doubleday, Page & Co.)

5.

Two women—one of them American and the other British—are responsible for the two best autumn novels up to this writing. Specifically, Willa Cather in *One of Ours*, and Rebecca West in *The Judge*, have produced in their several fashions works of the rarest distinction and power.

Miss Cather offers, indeed, in the first two thirds of her new book, the best work of her career—which is not to say that the last third is not good. It is good, and more than good—but it is not worthy of the major portion of the book, over which the wide quiet personality of this writer spreads like the clear light of her own prairies. *One of Ours* is the story of the late boyhood and early manhood of a prosperous Nebraskan farmer; of his childish, futile revolts against the inhibitions of his life, hardening too soon, into the dumb resentment of manhood, till at last the war comes to open to him the world. But *One of Ours* is not a war book—odd how we jump to assure possible readers of that. But it is the truth. Though Miss Cather follows her hero through the war, *One of Ours* is not a war book. In it Miss Cather merely uses the war to show that when freedom from humdrum existence does come to the average American it

comes too late. Given the field of adventure, he cannot become an adventurer. He can only "do" adventure as he might "do" the Tower of London and the Louvre. In Miss Cather's vision, the only freedom he can look for after a certain point is freedom from life itself. And, similarly, *One of Ours* is, primarily no more a story of the Nebraskan prairies than it is of the war. Although the greater part of it unfolds in that spacious country, in its essentials it might have been placed anywhere in America. But the prairies serve to give it the setting of loneliness, the proper setting for a story of the loneliness of the human soul.

The story Miss Cather has to tell never flags in interest, and the men and women it involves are people not to be forgotten soon. Even so, however, the larger value of the book is in the opportunity it affords for communion with the large personality of Willa Cather. In all her writings that personality is one which, to borrow a word of Wilson Follett's upon Joseph Conrad, conveys "a kind of tempered melancholy, a sense of seeking and not finding—" and a fascination with "the immense indifference of things": which, to borrow, now, a word of H. L. Mencken's, defines "both the mood of the stories as works of art and their burden and direction as criticisms of life". (*One of Ours*. By Willa Cather. Alfred A. Knopf.)

There is no tempered melancholy in Rebecca West. But there is a stormy emotionalism, a tremendous ability to feel, which is converted by her keen intellect and brilliant style, into the pure gold of literature. Miss West appears to be one of those writers—and they have always been few—who make intellect the master, instead of the slave, of language, and make language, in its turn, the unyielding master of emotion. Thus, under her apparently effortless generalship the most familiar words put forth easily a fullness of meaning often surprising. And, in its turn, her beautifully direct and incisive style seems always the sympathetic but immovable guardian of tempestuous emotions.

It does not matter, therefore, that as a story Miss West's book is badly balanced, that the half whimsical, wholly delightful first division of it ill "prepares" the torturing drama of the last. The first half, the scene of which is Edinburgh and the heroine of which is as adorable a little red haired lassie as ever appeared

in fiction, reminds you, indeed, of *Barrie*—so strongly that you wonder (till you know *Miss West* better) if the compliment to *Sir James* is one of imitation or of ratification: if, in other words, *Miss West* simply chose *Barrie* as the best existing model for a study of Scottish people, or if anyone writing adequately and knowingly of the Scottish character must inevitably remind you of *Barrie*. At any rate, there it is, the whimsical charm, humorous but unsparing insight, and the pathos, combined with *Miss West*'s own particular qualities of mind which she could not shed, whatever she might write about. Then, of a sudden, the scene is shifted to England, and the little Edinburgh typist is brought down to live with her prospective mother-in-law, and wait for marriage. And instantly the whole tone of the book changes, the note of tragedy, issuing from the breast of *Mrs. Yaverland*, rolls on unchecked, increasing in volume, absorbing all other notes, building up an emotional tension tormenting even to the reader. Quickly the little Scotch butterfly surrenders the spotlight to this broken, but still splendid death's head moth, and you see that it is solely for her, notwithstanding her late entrance into the story, that *Miss West* created the book: for her, who furnishes the title of the volume in the phrase: "Every Mother is a judge who sentences the children for the sins of the father."

This title, however, and this phrase, are inadequate to the task of shading *Mrs. Yaverland* out into a type, or aligning her situation with anything in the nature of a "problem", if such was *Miss West*'s intention. Considering her intelligence, it is hardly probable that such was *Miss West*'s intention, but if for any reason she did attempt this cheapening of her work, let us be thankful that she pushed the effort no further than the choice of her title, and so failed. *Mrs. Yaverland*'s outlines, then, remain sharply defined, strong,—and her own. They have no weak spots where the tragedy that was hers might bulge out and touch some other mother's. Considering that tragedy in detail, and the towering misery of her which crushed the lives of those she would have saved, I hold no brief for her as a probable person. But probable or not, I do acclaim her a figure of too much force to be less than a work of art; and where is the need of her being more than that? (*The Judge*. By *Rebecca West*. George H. Doran Co.)